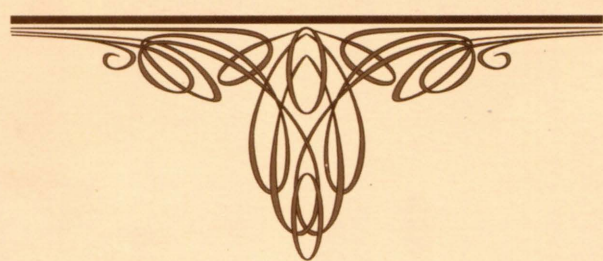




# History of the Cleveland Ohio Stake



Compiled by Sandra Stubben  
July 2000





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### **Acknowledgments:**

When I was first asked by President Rice to compile the history of the Cleveland Ohio Stake, I could not have imagined then the enormity of the project and the amount of time that it would involve. However, my work alone never could have accomplished this undertaking. The history would not be complete without recognizing the valuable contributions of many of our past and present stake members. Most particularly, I would like to thank Donald and LaVon Brewer not only for their contributions but also for their continual encouragement and assistance. Karl Anderson was also an invaluable source of information and help, and he willingly shared his own research with me. Roger and Gladys Osborne, Forest and Gerry Squire, and Pam Groesbeck Smith gathered information that helped me immensely. Also adding their talents to the project were Jerry M. Harston, who designed the history's cover, and Joseph and Helen McClain, who, among other friends, helped to edit the manuscript. My family was the greatest support to me. My husband Tom is responsible for the layout of the history, and has spent countless hours assisting me. My daughter Jennifer has spent hours rewriting each successive manuscript, and my son Steve has been meticulous in checking minor details. Compiling the history has been a most rewarding experience for me. I hope it will help members "catch the vision" of the historical importance of the Cleveland Ohio Stake and of the part each of us needs to play in its future.



**T**he history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the area of the Cleveland Ohio Stake begins with the organization of the first stake of the Church in 1834. This stake, called the Kirtland Stake, included branches scattered throughout Northeast Ohio covering the area of the current Cleveland, Akron, and Kirtland Ohio Stakes. The Northeast Ohio period of Church history from 1831 to 1838 is significant in terms of its contribution to the historical, doctrinal, and scriptural foundation upon which the Church is built.<sup>1</sup> It was a period of great Pentecostal outpourings. Former Cleveland Stake President Karl R. Anderson stated, "The story of Kirtland . . . is really the story of our Savior, Jesus Christ, as He directed and participated in reestablishing His Church in Kirtland. There are more recorded appearances of Him here than anywhere else in our dispensation. Joseph Smith had ten such visions of Deity in Kirtland."<sup>2</sup> God the Father was seen in four of these visions.<sup>3</sup>

Kirtland was the site of the first temple built in this dispensation.

Under the Lord's direction, Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared in the Kirtland Temple and committed sacred priesthood keys to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery so that the work in this dispensation could be carried out (D&C 110:11-15). Joseph Smith received eighty-four separate revelations from God in Kirtland including nearly half of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants. These revelations contain clear instructions about most major points of the gospel.<sup>4</sup> Virtually all of Joseph's translation of the Bible occurred in Northeast Ohio. It was here that Joseph Smith purchased the mummies that contained the papyrus from which the Book of Abraham was

translated.<sup>5</sup> Key revelations and doctrine given here include the Word of Wisdom, the Three Degrees of Glory, the Law of Consecration, and the Lectures on Faith. The Church organization was revealed in Northeast Ohio. Joseph Smith was sustained as President of the High Priesthood in Amherst, Ohio, in 1832. The first priesthood quorums, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the First Quorum of the Seventy were organized in Ohio.<sup>6</sup> The School of the Prophets convened

in Kirtland, and from this area the gospel was first carried to foreign lands.

Joseph Smith made several prophecies regarding the future of the Kirtland area. In a blessing given in 1834 to Zebedee Coltrin, Joseph prophesied that "Kirtland [would be] established forever."<sup>7</sup>

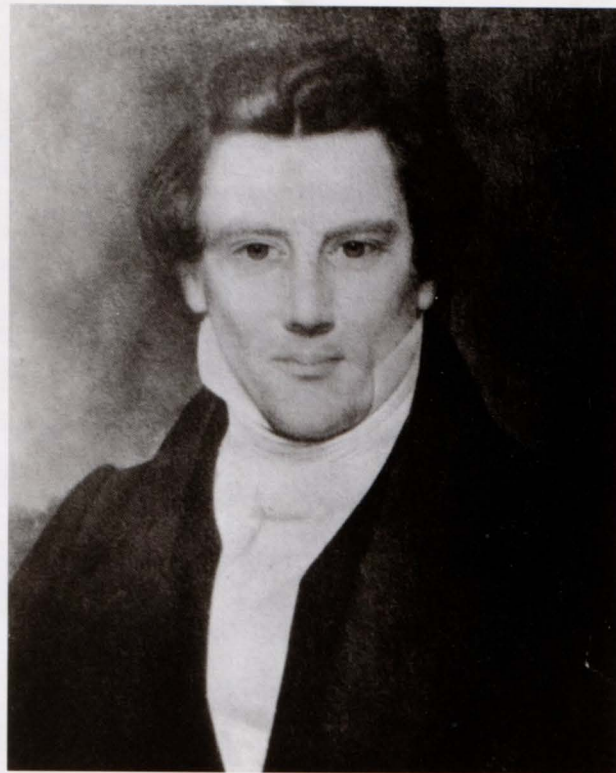
Other statements include: "Kirtland would be one of the principal stakes of Zion"<sup>8</sup>

(1836), and "This place [Kirtland] must and will be built up"<sup>9</sup>

(1837). Joseph never forgot Kirtland and its destiny. Even after the Saints left the Kirtland area for Missouri and Illinois, Joseph referred repeatedly to Kirtland and its future. He stated, "Something should be done with

regard to Kirtland, so that it might be built up"<sup>10</sup> (1840), "It would be gratifying to my mind to see the saints in Kirtland flourish, but I think the time has not yet come"<sup>11</sup> (1840), and finally, "You [Kirtland] will yet see good and glorious days"<sup>12</sup> (1840). The night before the Prophet's martyrdom in Carthage Jail in 1844, Joseph Smith had a "dream or vision" in which he felt he was back in Kirtland.<sup>13</sup>

Most of the Saints left the area of the original Kirtland Stake in 1838. The Church started to grow once again in Northeast Ohio about one hundred years later. A stake was created in 1961, and it was called the Cleveland Stake.



Joseph Smith was the first Stake President of the Kirtland Stake



This stake included much of the area of the original Kirtland Stake, including the city of Kirtland. The Church leaders of the Cleveland Stake caught the vision of the early prophecies and were moved upon to build up the area and to help obtain and restore key sites of the original Kirtland Stake. Cleveland Stake President Karl R. Anderson (1974 – 1978) stated, “When we think of the prophecies, brothers and sisters, let us not forget one thing. . . . The prophecies were made, and they will be fulfilled with us or without us.”<sup>14</sup> Cleveland Stake President William A. Groesbeck (1980 – 1990) remarked, “Kirtland shall rise. I don’t just mean this immediate area of Kirtland, but I think, of all northeastern Ohio. This area shall rise, and follow the Lord.”<sup>15</sup> He further stated, “Our challenge is indeed to catch the vision of a mighty work, the work of the Lord, that we are builders of the kingdom.”<sup>16</sup> As the Cleveland Stake grew in Northeast Ohio, the Akron Stake was created from the Cleveland Stake in 1975, and the Kirtland Stake was created in 1983.

#### **Four Missionaries Bring the Gospel to Northeast Ohio**

Six months after the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, the restored gospel was brought to Northeast Ohio by four missionaries. These missionaries, Parley P. Pratt, Oliver Cowdery, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer were called as missionaries to the Lamanite descendants living in the western borders of the United States (D&C 32). On their way to western Missouri in the fall of 1830, they stopped and preached in the Kirtland, Ohio, area. Sidney Rigdon, a minister and friend of Parley P. Pratt, accepted the gospel and joined the Church in Mentor, near Kirtland, bringing with him many members of the congregation over which he presided. Elder Pratt wrote, “In two or three weeks from our

arrival . . . we had baptized one hundred twenty-seven souls, and this number soon increased to one thousand.”<sup>17</sup> The missionaries stayed for one month in Northeast Ohio, during which time they continued to preach in the area. The towns they visited included Kirtland, Mentor, Mayfield, Euclid, Orange, Warrensville, North Union (Shaker Heights), and Painesville.<sup>18</sup> Among the new converts were many men who became leaders in the Church, including Sidney

Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, Lyman Wight, Newell K. Whitney, Levi Hancock, and John Murdock. Edward Partridge and Orson Hyde were baptized after the elders departed.<sup>19</sup> Before leaving the area, the missionaries ordained local leaders.

The four missionaries, accompanied by a newly baptized Frederick G. Williams, then resumed their journey and proceeded fifty miles west of Kirtland to an area in Ohio near the Black River where Elder Pratt and his wife had once lived. They stopped at the home of Simeon Carter in Amherst and left a Book of Mormon.<sup>20</sup> After leaving Amherst, the missionaries traveled in the Upper

Sandusky area and spent several days with the Wyandot Indians. Elder Pratt wrote, “We were well received and had an opportunity of laying before them the record of their forefathers, which we did. They rejoiced in the tidings, bid us God speed, and desired us to write to them in relation to our success among the tribes further west.”<sup>21</sup>

#### **The Saints Gather to Ohio**

About one month after the four missionaries left Ohio, the Lord declared through revelation to Joseph Smith in New York, “And again, a commandment I give unto the church, that it is expedient in me that they should assemble together at the Ohio” (D&C 37:3). He further revealed, “Go to the Ohio; and there I will give

*“Behold I say unto you,  
here is wisdom, whereby  
ye may know how to act  
concerning this matter,  
for it is expedient in me  
that this stake [Kirtland]  
that I have set for the  
strength of Zion should be  
made strong.”*

D&C 96:1



## The Amherst Branch of the Kirtland Stake

Parley P. Pratt and his wife Thankful settled in a log dwelling on a farm in Amherst in 1827. They, along with several others, joined the Disciples of Christ congregation that Sidney Rigdon had established. Prompted by the Spirit to go back east and preach in the summer of 1830, Parley discovered and read the Book of Mormon. He was baptized, confirmed, ordained an elder, and then called on a mission to preach to the Lamanites. Elder Pratt, along with Oliver Cowdery, Ziba Peterson, and Peter Whitmer, Jr., preached in the Kirtland area and then continued west. They stopped at the home of Simeon Carter, a friend of Parley, in Amherst. While reading the Book of Mormon to Simeon, an officer arrived and arrested Parley on a frivolous charge. Parley told the other three missionaries to go on ahead, and he would join them. Elder Pratt related the events of the next day:

After sitting awhile by the fire in charge of the officer, I requested to step out. I walked out into the public square accompanied by him. Said I, "Mr. Peabody, are you good at a race?" "No," said he, "but my big bull dog is, and he has been trained to assist me in my office these several years; he will take any man down at my bidding." "Well, Mr. Peabody, you compelled me to go a mile, I have gone with you two miles. You have given me an opportunity to preach, sing, and have also entertained me with lodging and breakfast. I must now go on my journey; if you are good at a race, you can accompany me. I thank you for all your kindness—good day sir." Parley then started on his journey. The officer, amazed, shouted at his dog, Stuboy, to seize Parley. Parley said, "The dog was fast overtaking me, and in the act of leaping upon me, when, quick as

lightning, the thought struck me, to assist the officer, in sending the dog with all fury to the forest a little distance before me. I pointed my finger in that direction, clapped my hands, and shouted an imitation of the officer. The dog hastened past me with redoubled speed towards the forest."<sup>22</sup>

Parley then rejoined his companions. Other missionaries, including Levi Hancock and Zebedee Coltrin, arrived in the area and baptized over seventy people in the Vermilion River. Joel Hills Johnson, author of the hymn, "High on a Mountain Top," was called to preside over the Church in the Amherst area. A conference of the Church was held at Amherst in 1832. During this conference, Joseph Smith was ordained President of the High Priesthood (D&C 75). Among the members attending the conference were Royal and Edson Barney, whose cousin Israel would be one of the scouts preceding Brigham Young into the Salt Lake valley in 1847. Warren Smith and his wife Amanda (Barnes) were typical members in the area. They joined the Church in 1831. In 1834 they, along with other members of the Amherst area, sold their farm and moved to Kirtland to build the temple. In 1838, when the Saints were driven out of Kirtland, the Smiths, along with their five children, traveled one thousand miles to Far West, Missouri. They stopped one night at the home of friends at Haun's Mill. The next day, Warren and their son Sardius were among those killed in the blacksmith shop during the Haun's Mill massacre. Another son, Alma, who was seven years old, had his hip shot away and was miraculously healed when his mother turned to the Lord for help. Many Amherst families remained friends for life, regardless of where they moved. Several of the children of Amherst families intermarried.<sup>23</sup>

unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high" (D&C 38:32). The Lord promised, "And, inasmuch as my people shall assemble themselves together at the Ohio, I have kept in store a blessing such as

is not known among the children of men, and it shall be poured forth upon their heads. And from thence men shall go forth into all nations" (D&C 39:15). On February 1, 1831, about ten months after the organization of the Church, Joseph





*Kirtland Stake Branches in Northeast Ohio - 1831 to 1838<sup>24</sup>*

Smith, following the Lord's command, arrived in Kirtland. The Saints from New York soon followed the Prophet. For the next seven years, Northeast Ohio, primarily Kirtland, was the principal administrative headquarters and center of Church activity.

The Northeast Ohio area was included in the first stake of the Church in 1834. The Lord declared, "For I have consecrated the land of Kirtland in mine own due time for the benefit of the saints of the Most High, and for a stake to Zion" (D&C 82:13). The stake, called Kirtland, included geographically the present stakes of Akron, Cleveland, and Kirtland. Joseph Smith was the first stake president.<sup>25</sup> At the time, the stake included branches scattered throughout the area. In the 1830s the present Akron Ohio Stake area contained six branches: New London, Chippeway, New Portage, Northampton, Suffield, and Shalersville. The current Cleveland Ohio Stake included the Florence, Amherst, Elyria, and Strongsville branches. The current Kirtland Ohio Stake contained the Hiram, Nelson, Andover, Warrensville, Orange, Windsor, Chardon, Mayfield, Kirtland, Mentor, Thompson, and Madison branches.<sup>26</sup> The name Kirt-

land, as it is often used in journals and early histories, refers to this tri-stake area of Kirtland, Cleveland, and Akron. There are several historic sites in the area of the early Kirtland Stake. These sites, like Amherst, have their own unique history. (See box on page 3.)

Edward Partridge, the first bishop for this area, was called by the Lord in the first revelation given in Ohio, Section 41 of the Doctrine and Covenants, in February of 1831 (D&C 41:9). Bishop Partridge was called to move to Missouri later in 1831 as Saints began to assemble at this second gathering place. A second bishop, Newel K. Whitney, was then called to serve as bishop in the Ohio area (D&C 72:8-9).

### **The Saints Leave Kirtland**

Unfortunately, the Saints' time of peace in Northeast Ohio did not last very long. In early 1838, due to intensifying pressure from outside the Church, the Saints were virtually forced to abandon their lives and homes in the Kirtland area. Karl R. Anderson stated, "As violence against the Saints and their leaders escalated, it was finally no longer safe for them to remain in



## The Kirtland Temple

The major activity in Kirtland from 1833 to 1836 centered on building the temple. The cornerstones of the Kirtland Temple were laid on July 23, 1833, and the temple was dedicated on March 27, 1836. Karl R. Anderson stated, "Neither the Church nor its poverty-stricken members had ever undertaken such a task. The cost of the building, estimated at about \$40,000, was a staggering sum for the 1830s."<sup>27</sup> Eliza R. Snow wrote:

At that time . . . the Saints were few in number, and most of them very poor; and had it not been for the assurance that God had spoken, and had commanded that a house should be built to His name, of which He not only revealed the form but also designated the dimensions, an attempt towards building that temple under then existing circumstances, would have been, by all concerned, pronounced preposterous.<sup>28</sup>

At a special meeting of Church leaders in the nearly completed Kirtland Temple on January 21, 1836, Joseph Smith saw God the Father and His Son in a vision (D&C 137:1-4). A few months later, on the afternoon of April 3, 1836, the Presidency and Apostles participated in administering the sacrament in the newly dedicated temple, following which the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery retired to the pulpit to engage in silent prayer. The heavens were opened to them, and they saw the Lord standing on the breastwork of the pulpit (D&C 110:2-4). Several ancient prophets were also seen in the temple. Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared and conferred the keys of their dispen-

sations and authorities to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery (D&C 110:11-15). M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated that this bestowing of keys was not unlike what occurred at the Mount of Transfiguration about two thousand years ago.<sup>29</sup> During this Pentecostal period, Peter appeared.<sup>30</sup> John the Beloved,<sup>31</sup> Adam, and Abraham were also seen (D&C 137:5). Historian Milton V. Backman, Jr. wrote:

During a fifteen-week period, extending from January 21 to May 1, 1836, probably more Latter-day Saints beheld visions and witnessed other unusual spiritual manifestations than during any other era in the history of the Church.<sup>32</sup>

Elder Ballard stated:

For many weeks surrounding the Kirtland Temple dedication, the Savior, past prophets, and angels communed

directly with Joseph and Hyrum and other great leaders of our dispensation. Joseph prophesied that these Pentecostal events would be "handed down . . . to all generations" and that we should celebrate them as a "year of jubilee, and time of rejoicing" (HC 2:432-433).<sup>33</sup>

After the Saints left the area, apostates seized the temple. The building was used by different groups for religious, educational, and civic purposes. The current owners of the temple, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, obtained legal title to the temple on February 23, 1880, and later restored it.<sup>34</sup>



*Kirtland Temple*



Kirtland. The prophet, whose life was in gravest danger, was 'warned by the Spirit' and decided to move immediately to Missouri."<sup>35</sup> Joseph left Kirtland on January 12, 1838. The great majority of the Saints soon followed Joseph in a mass exodus. According to Karl R. Anderson, "In the first months of 1838, more than sixteen hundred Latter-day Saints left the city."<sup>36</sup> The Saints traveled an arduous journey to Far West, Missouri, which had been designated as the new home of the Saints for a time. Milton V. Backman wrote concerning this trek:

Throughout the spring and early summer of 1838, small groups of Mormons left Kirtland for the western frontier in Missouri. While some enjoyed the luxury of water transportation, most walked or traveled in wagons. Like other pioneers of that age, few Latter-day Saints were accustomed to walking or riding such long distances, day after day, suffering from illness, fatigue, blistered feet, biting cold, intense heat, and unquenched thirst. Wagons became mired in the mud, wagon wheels and tongues broke, and animals collapsed and died. Moreover, many women gave birth during the long journey, while other Saints grieved the loss of husbands, wives, or children buried in graves along the trail leading west.<sup>37</sup>

Just one year after Joseph left Kirtland, only about one hundred Saints remained in the area.<sup>38</sup> As the early Saints departed the Kirtland area, the Lord promised that he would rebuild the area, but only after a time. He placed a "curse" or "scourge" on it and declared: "I, the Lord, will build up Kirtland, but I, the Lord, have a scourge prepared for the inhabitants thereof" (D&C 124:83). In October of 1841, Joseph

Smith recorded in his journal an extract from a letter written by his brother Hyrum, the Patriarch of the Church, to the remaining Kirtland Saints. Hyrum, speaking in the name of the Lord, said:

All the Saints that dwell in that land [the Kirtland area] are commanded to come away, for this is "Thus saith the Lord;" therefore pay out no moneys, nor properties for houses, nor lands in that country, for if you do you will lose them, for the time shall come, that you shall not possess them in peace, but shall be scourged with a sore scourge; yet your children may possess them, but not until many years shall pass away; . . . and then I [the Lord] will send forth and build up Kirtland, and it shall be polished and refined according to my word.<sup>39</sup>

Artel Ricks, an early district president of the North Ohio District, explained, "Hyrum's prophecy was not limited to the members in Kirtland Township or the county of which it is a part. It appears to have applied to the entire Kirtland Stake, most of the branches of which were in Northeast Ohio in an area about one-sixth the size of the state of Utah."<sup>40</sup>

The remaining Saints in Kirtland were not forgotten by the Church leadership. In November of 1839, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball stopped in Kirtland on their way to the British Mission. Brigham Young recorded that he met many friends and brethren who were glad to see him. Many of these persons, Brigham Young added, "lacked the energy or disposition to move to Missouri in 1838."<sup>41</sup> On Sunday, November 17, 1839, Brigham Young and John Taylor preached in the temple and also participated in temple ordinances.<sup>42</sup> In 1812 Apostle Lyman Wight visited Kirtland while on a mission and rebaptized a number of "wayward

*"All the Saints that dwell in that land [the Kirtland area] are commanded to come away . . . pay out no moneys . . . nor lands in that country, for if you do you will lose them . . . yet your children may possess them, but not until many years shall pass away; . . . and then I [the Lord] will send forth and build up Kirtland, and it shall be polished and refined according to my word."*

Hyrum Smith, Patriarch of the Church, speaking in the name of the Lord



Saints.”<sup>43</sup> Many of these members gathered to Illinois. However, several Saints in the Kirtland area remained.<sup>44</sup> Brigham Young, in 1845, directed the Saints in the area to move west, “leaving neither man, woman, or child behind that desires to come up here with a pure heart, leaving Kirtland to the owls and the bats for a season.”<sup>45</sup>

Karl R. Anderson stated, “The scourge on Kirtland must have weighed heavily on the Prophet. The night before his martyrdom in the Carthage Jail in 1844, Joseph Smith had a ‘dream or vision’ in which he felt he was back in Kirtland, Ohio . . . and was contemplating how it might be recovered from the curse upon it.”<sup>46</sup>

Donald S. Brewer, the first mission president of the Ohio Cleveland Mission, remarked, “The Lord felt that Kirtland, Ohio, was important enough that he took the Prophet back there the night before he died. Why did the Lord take him back to Kirtland? It is very significant to the future developments in the Kirtland area.”<sup>47</sup>

### A New Beginning

During the latter years of the 1840s, Church activity in the Northeast Ohio area dwindled. There were few reminders left of the Church that once had flourished. Although some area residents may have forgotten their Mormon neighbors, the Saints did not forget Ohio. By 1876 missionaries had returned to the area. These missionaries were called to the **Northern States Mission**, an area consisting of the states of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. Missionaries often traveled extensively, holding street meetings in various places. Elder Niles P. Romney, a missionary from Marion, Marion County, Ohio, wrote a letter to the *Deseret News*, a newspaper published in Salt Lake City. The letter written on June 12, 1876 told of missionary efforts in central Ohio. Elder Romney stated:

We held meeting in Belle schoolhouse, Jackson Township, Union County. The house was crowded with an attentive

audience. I addressed them on faith, repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands, followed by Brother James Bay on the same subject, after which I arose to thank the people for their attention, and dismiss them, when crack! went a pane of glass, and an egg came whizzing through the window, striking me on the right shoulder, followed by several more, one striking the wall just above Brother Bay’s head, another striking a Baptist between the eyes, splashing over several young ladies who were sitting on the same seat. Of course, several ladies screamed, but we never felt more self-possessed in our lives. We quieted the audience and dismissed them in good order. Some thought a general assault would be made on us when we left the house, but we felt that we were in the hands of God, and that He would protect us. We walked through the crowd and to our lodging about a mile off without any further demonstration. . . . The Lord turns all such things to our good, for the account of this affair is spreading, and the general sentiment condemns it and the sympathies of the people are with us.”<sup>48</sup>

*“I, the Lord,  
will build up  
Kirtland, but I,  
the Lord, have  
a scourge prepared for the  
inhabitants  
thereof.”*

D&C

124:83

The semi-annual report of the Northern States Mission in 1882 had a column for the number of incidents of mob violence and also the number of Saints who had emigrated to Utah. Often when missionaries baptized converts, it did not translate into growth for the Ohio area because they would gather their new converts and escort them to Utah.<sup>49</sup>

In 1907 Ohio became part of the **Southern States Mission**, which was headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. Ohio was organized into the “Ohio Conference” and quickly became known as a “hospital state,” or a “place with a mild climate where ailing missionaries could be sent from the hot southern climate for recuperation.”<sup>50</sup> Elder Ernest D. Phippen, a missionary serving in central Ohio in 1907 and 1908, told of meetings held in 1907 at the home of William



Cook in Columbus. From these meetings, a branch was organized with Elder William T. Lister as president.<sup>51</sup> Elder Phippen related:

The Saints and many friends were wonderful to the elders and often had us at their homes for meals and to stay all night, but the treatment often given the elders by those who did not know us and who were opposed to the work of the Lord was quite different. Some of these experiences were faith promoting and some were vicious threats against us personally and the Mormons generally. . . . Unpleasant circumstances were soon forgotten when in the spirit of our calling some of the honest in heart would respond to our teachings and be persuaded that Mormonism is, indeed, the gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ.<sup>52</sup>

The members in Akron were organized into a branch in 1918 with Emil Gammeter as branch president and John Lusk, Sr., and E. C. Valentine as counselors. Emil Gammeter was the first member to reside in the Akron area at the beginning of the twentieth century. After 1906 the Lusks, Costills, and Bevans joined him. By 1912 meetings were held at the Costill home. Missionaries made the Ensign farm west of Wadsworth their headquarters as they traveled throughout the county preaching the gospel.<sup>53</sup> Reports in 1930 show the Akron area to have had eighty-five members.<sup>54</sup>

In the 1920s the **Northern Ohio District** encompassed the Akron, Cleveland, and Columbus areas of the Church. In 1925 the new district became part of the Northern States Mission, headquartered in Chicago. Missionary reports show greater success during this time period, and several small branches were being organized in Ohio. Elder Conly Hansen, who was assigned as a missionary in the Columbus area in 1923, recounted his missionary experiences:

[Elder Johnson] was the one who took me on my first country trips. Twice we went out without purse or scrip and those experiences were very humbling to me. I hated to go from place to place and ask for a place to stay or for something to eat (I figured at that time that I was begging). I

guess it was the memory of my mother, who had a place out on the porch for those who are called 'hoboes,' who came by our house almost every day and offered to work for food. She had a wood pile for them and would send them out there to chop wood. Some would chop and some wouldn't; however, she always gave them a sandwich and a glass of milk. I guess I was associating my traveling without purse or scrip to those hoboes who used to come by. But when the authorities asked us to do it, I tried my best to get in line because I felt that I had never been let down by those authorities. . . . Sometimes we would go a long time without much to eat. Sometimes we would go into a store and ask for a loaf of stale bread if we didn't get anything from the houses. On the country trips we were looking for members a big part of the time, and we would tract as we went along. Some of the houses in the country were in the backwoods, and we sometimes hitchhiked fifty to seventy-five miles to get to a member's place. It took a long time to walk and tract a place.<sup>55</sup>

Harry J. Russell was called as branch president of the Columbus Branch in 1925. Some early families attending the branch in Columbus in 1925 included the Beattys, Busicks, Grays, Haines, Hofferts, Russells, and Schoenstrass.<sup>56</sup> In 1930 there were ninety-seven members in Columbus, and a Church building was dedicated by President Heber J. Grant.<sup>57</sup>

In the late 1920s a small branch was formed in the Cleveland area. Martin Peter Jaracz, a native of Ohio, was baptized in Utah in 1921. His daughter, Virginia, wrote:



*Missionaries in Cleveland about 1928-1929*



When [my father] came back to Cleveland, he met our mother, Marjorie Elizabeth Hatter, in April of 1926. They were married approximately six weeks later. After their marriage, and as a result of the witness of the Book of Mormon, our father converted our mother to the gospel. She was baptized into the Church. On Thursday, March 17, 1927, she entered the icy waters of Lake Erie and she had memorable, spiritual experiences! In 1927 another fine family, John Ross Ravencraft and his wife Mary C. Heidinger Ravencraft, and their small daughter, June, joined the Church. These two couples along with about two or three others, comprised the membership at that time. . . . During the 1920s, the members met in

1933, the Cleveland area became a Sunday School. Brother Reinhold Schneidereit was the first superintendent. The membership had now grown to about thirty-five members. In the late fall of 1935, Brother and Sister Jaracz moved to Akron with their two daughters, Virginia and Louise. Brother and Sister Ravencraft with their three daughters, June, Beulah (Bee), and Pat remained in the Cleveland area. Like Marjorie Jaracz, Bee Ravencraft (Schromm) was baptized in Lake Erie. The event took place at Gordon Park off of the East 55<sup>th</sup> Street pier.<sup>58</sup>

In 1936 the Cleveland Branch was still meeting at Carnegie Hall. The attendance records of the Cleveland Branch show an average



*Baptism near Euclid Beach about 1929*

cottage meetings at each others' homes. They even met Sunday mornings over a saloon on the West Side of Cleveland. Sister Ravencraft has related that as they had their services, the liquor bottles would roll under their feet and they had to kick them away! By 1929 there were approximately twenty members of the Church in Cleveland. Soon after, the members met in their new quarters in Carnegie Hall located at 1220 Huron Road. In April of

attendance of only eight members. Records indicate that Elder Thane D. Winward and Elder Wilson C. Chandler presided at the meetings. District President Keith P. Larson often spoke. Those attending meetings, in addition to missionaries, included Reinhold Schneidereit, Elizabeth Schneidereit, Mary Ravencraft, Anthony Jaracz, Martin Jaracz, Anna Ohlrich, Edith Munz, Doris Munz, Clyde Archer, Sister Schumaker, Ellen Gauley, Evelyn Gauley, Harold Young, Henry Young, and Annie Young.<sup>59</sup>





*Members at Pick Carter Hotel<sup>60</sup>*

*Family names included: Akester, Alexander, Amott, Aplin, Astle, Bingham, Cazier, Dittmer, Dowling, Eccles, Erickson, Evans, Gillie, Gillispie, Glauser, Hall, Hatfield, Haymond, Hill, Hilland, Howard, Jaris, Johnson, Lewis, Lund, Lynsky, Marin, McDonald, Morgan, Nelson, Newman, Nichols, Olsen, Price, Ravencraft, Rheimschussel, Schneidereit, Sessions, Shurtliff, Skousen, Smith, Snow, Truby, Vasenda, Wangsgaard, Webster, Wight, Wilsted, Wright, Yong, and Young.*

### **Cleveland Branch Organized – 1937**

The Cleveland Branch was officially organized on September 12, 1937.<sup>61</sup> Elmer R. Hall was set apart as the first branch president with Alfred Glauser and Reinhold Schneidereit as his counselors.<sup>62</sup>

### **Northern Ohio District Reorganized – 1939**

In October of 1939, the Columbus Branch was separated from the Northern Ohio District, leaving the Cleveland and Akron Branches as the new North Ohio District.<sup>63</sup> A newspaper reporter visited a sacrament meeting at the Cleveland Branch in 1940. He wrote, “I found the Mormons cordial and hearty in their welcome to a stranger who strayed into their services. The group is not large, but they are friendly, and there is a spirited song service.”<sup>64</sup> During the years of World War II, several LDS soldiers and their families moved into the Cleveland area, greatly increasing the area’s membership and activity. Many men were enrolled in the dentistry program at Western Re-

serve University; others, like Don L. Cazier, were in the Navy training program. Esca Snow and his family came into the Church during this time, providing the local Church with staunch support.<sup>65</sup> The Cleveland Branch encompassed not only the city of Cleveland but also a large part of Northeast Ohio. The branch boundaries extended from the Pennsylvania border to Sandusky and from Lake Erie to the city of Hudson. In 1941 the branch moved from Carnegie Hall to the Pick Carter Hotel a few doors away on Prospect Avenue. The members met at the hotel for about thirteen years until their new chapel was built.<sup>66</sup> In 1946 average attendance at meetings was thirty people.<sup>67</sup>

### **New Branches Organized**

An influx of new members in the late 1940s initiated a new era of rebirth and growth. Harry W. Headrick, Sr., and his wife moved to the *Warren* area in 1945. Brother Headrick remembered:

I was released from the Air Corps on November 26, 1945. Virginia and I were



baptized in the tabernacle on June 10, 1945. When we got back to Warren, we couldn't find the Church. There was nothing in newspapers or telephone books. In the fall of 1946, a member, Brother Eicher, and a missionary, Elder Eugene Robinson, knocked on our door. We learned that there was a small branch in Youngstown that met at the YMCA. . . .

The **Youngstown Branch** consisted of two elders (local), Brother and Sister Eicher, Brother and Sister Kane, and about six sisters. . . . The missionaries had been in this branch a year and never had a baptism. A Sunday School was started in Warren in about 1949 or 1950, and we shortly became a branch with members the Headricks, Moores, and Henakys. We grew to about one hundred members, which included approximately twenty members living in Sharon, Pennsylvania.<sup>68</sup>

In the summer of 1947, Elders Eugene Robinson and Perry Brisco were doing country tracting in Alliance and contacted Ruby Flory and her husband Lawrence through a friend. The missionaries were looking for a place to hold meetings and asked the Florys if they could hold meetings in the Flory home. The Florys agreed to hold the meetings in their home, but Sister Flory remembers then "wondering whom they had agreed to have hold meetings in their home as they had never heard of Mormons."<sup>69</sup> When the Flory home became too small to hold the members, meetings were held in a hall in Alliance. The **Alliance Branch** was organized on October 26, 1947. Missionaries conducted branch affairs. Ruby Flory was baptized on June 17, 1948, and her husband Lawrence was baptized a few years later.<sup>70</sup>

When the Florys moved to Canton in 1949, Sister Flory remembers that they "brought the branch with them."<sup>71</sup> The **Canton Branch** was organized in the Flory home on July 17, 1949, by Elder Keith E. Richardson and Elder Keith Crandell. Fifteen people were present at the meeting. Brother and Sister Reo Wright, Ruby Flory, and the missionaries were the only members. Elder Richardson was called as the first branch president.

A group of missionaries began to preach the gospel in the **Euclid** area in the early 1950s. Eight members and four missionaries attended

the first meeting, held on October 21, 1951, in a rented hall on Lake Shore Boulevard. Among the new members were Sisters Burrell, Clark, and Giacomazzo. The Euclid members merged into the Cleveland Branch and helped build the new chapel on Lake Avenue.<sup>72</sup>

Artel Ricks, the district president of the North Ohio District from 1950 to 1954, remembers:

The district had about 500-600 members in several struggling branches. Only Akron had a chapel, an old one, purchased from another church. Our very strong impression was that something was taking place here that we couldn't really explain. It was as if we were coming out of darkness and greater light was ahead. We felt that the Lord must have great things in store for this early cradle of the Church. We told our mission president how we felt, and he said he also felt that a great change was taking place, and the Lord was blessing the area.<sup>73</sup>

A number of future General Authorities served missions in northern Ohio in the 1940s and 1950s. They included Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Elder Robert L. Backman and Elder Marion D. Hanks of the Quorum of Seventy.<sup>74</sup>

### First Chapel Built in the Cleveland Area

Brother Melvin L. Gillie was sustained in 1950 as president of the Cleveland Branch. The branch looked forward to a time when they could build their own meetinghouse. However, President Gillie and his congregation faced the enormous task of boosting their building fund from less than \$500 to the necessary \$11,000 needed to initiate construction. In his zeal, President Gillie was jokingly accused of having laid awake nights dreaming up new ways of adding a dollar to the building fund.<sup>75</sup> Branch member Pearl Vasenda recalled that President Gillie knew he would have to raise the funds with projects and creative fund-raisers because many of the members were dental students at Western Reserve University and had little if any extra money to contribute to the fund. Sister Vasenda remembered that the branch held fund-raising dinners at the YMCA near East 105<sup>th</sup> Street and Euclid Avenue and organized a rum-



mage sale on East 55<sup>th</sup> Street. She said that President Gillie would give money from the building fund to members and then tell them to use it to make a profit. The member would buy the material to make some item that could be sold for more than the cost of the supplies.<sup>76</sup> For a time the members also sold green china plates with a picture of the Salt Lake Temple in the center and the other ten existing temples, including Kirtland, around the outer edge.<sup>77</sup> In only three years, the members of the Cleveland Branch successfully raised the money needed and were able to begin construction on a lot at 9509 Lake Avenue, across from what is today the upper part of Edgewater State Park.

The excitement surrounding the construction of the first chapel in the Cleveland area since the 1800s did not escape the notice of the local press. Following the groundbreaking for the building, an editorial appeared in the *Cleveland Press*:

If Joseph Smith, the dedicated and courageous founder of the Mormon Church were living today, he would take special pride in the news that a new Mormon chapel shortly will be built on Lake Avenue near Edgewater Park. The building would, for him, undoubtedly be the confirmation of his own faith, once shared by too few in northern Ohio, that the Church had the spiritual strength and economic substance to live and grow. It was the religious forebearers of the builders of this chapel, first in Cleveland, who constructed a Mormon Temple more than 120

years ago in nearby Kirtland. . . . And it must be with great pride that Cleveland Mormons can now note that their Church's strength is sufficient to push the frontier back above the route of their once tragic march, and that they can build a

chapel so close to the historic spot in Kirtland where their early temple stood.<sup>78</sup>

The actual construction of the building required the time and effort of many Church members. Forest Squire, an early president of the Cleveland Stake recalled, "The Church instituted a building missionary program to promote the construction of Church build-

ings by calling full-time members with construction management and building skills as missionaries. The program called for members to raise a certain percentage of the funds for construction and to donate labor as the building was constructed under professionals."<sup>79</sup> The Church sent as a missionary Brother Archie Moore, a stone mason. He oversaw the work on the building and taught members how to cut stone and do other related work. With the exception of the technical, electrical, and plumbing work, the members were involved in almost every aspect of construction. Larry L. Birrell, a member of the branch presidency, was put in charge of the members' work. Roger A. Osborne, the branch clerk, kept track of the amount of labor donated by the members.<sup>80</sup> Each Sunday the members would sign up for the hours they could work. Each evening the Relief Society sisters provided a meal for the workers at the site of the chapel. The members would then work on the building, sometimes until midnight, and then



*Lake Road Chapel*



all day on Saturday.<sup>81</sup> Lee Ann Wilsted Packer wrote:

In about 1952, as the building was about half done, the branch ran out of funds. The members had given all they could afford and more. President Gillie sadly announced that construction would have to discontinue until we had more funds. I went to my mother and dad and asked if I could donate my life savings, which was about \$35, so they wouldn't have to quit work. That wasn't much money, but at seven years old, I thought it sounded like enough. My parents told me I could, so I offered it to the branch president. He was so overcome with emotion that a child would give all she had for the Church, that he announced it in sacrament meeting. When the other children heard about it, they wanted to give their life savings too. They collected enough money from the children to continue the work on the chapel.<sup>82</sup>

Sister Margaret Scarborough remembered vividly the events of this important period in the area's history:

When all the work started, the *Cleveland Press* and *Plain Dealer* really covered the building of the chapel with lots of publicity. The Mormons were back! After months, the building, yard, and parking lot were all finished and ready for dedication. David O. McKay, the Prophet, was to come to Cleveland on Saturday and Sunday to dedicate the building. It was one of the most spiritual things I have ever experienced. We were told the Prophet would be arriving at the Terminal Tower at 2 a.m. A group of us went to greet him. Brother Gillie and two missionaries went down the stairs to meet him, and we gathered at the top of the stairs. When they turned the corner, President McKay was in front. The first thing I saw was his beautiful white hair. We all started singing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." The day of the dedication so many people came, two policemen were on Lake Avenue directing traffic. Four loud speakers were put in the Edgewater Park across the street. It was full. The



**Top (l-r):** Roger A. Osborne, branch clerk; Larry L. Birrell, branch presidency; Lorin Richards, mission president; President David O. McKay; R. Bert Carter, district president; Melvin L. Gillie, branch president; and Zane Hall, branch clerk, at the dedication of the Lake Road chapel.

**Bottom:** Branch President Melvin L. Gillie speaking at the dedication.

*Plain Dealer* took many photos of the building. What a wonderful day to be in the presence of a prophet!<sup>83</sup>

As Sister Scarborough recalled, President McKay visited Cleveland on May 2, 1954, to formally dedicate the Lake Road chapel. In his talk, President McKay explained, "These lines from Ruskin written in his *Seven Lamps of Architecture* were recalled to my mind as I listened to the report of your labors in erecting this house of worship."<sup>84</sup> He quoted:

Therefore, when we build let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight nor for present years alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for and let us think as we lay stone on stone that a time is to come



when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them. And men will say as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them, see this our fathers did for us.<sup>85</sup>

President McKay went on to say, "There are many virtues in this building, one of which has been emphasized today, the virtue of fellowship and brotherhood. You men and women became acquainted with one another as you never had been acquainted before. That is a virtue which is fundamental in the Church. The spirit of brotherhood and fraternity. It is fostered by the building of these houses."<sup>86</sup>

Following his visit to Ohio, President McKay commissioned Wilford C. Wood to negotiate the purchase of the historic John Johnson home in Hiram. This, the first purchase of historic property in the Ohio area, was completed on March 23, 1956.<sup>87</sup>

### **Lorain and Sandusky Branches Organized – 1955**

As membership in the Northeast Ohio area grew, the Cleveland Branch became large enough to allow for the formation of the Lorain, Euclid, and Sandusky Branches.

The **Lorain Branch**, located west of Cleveland, was organized in January of 1955. The branch originally met at an Elks Lodge before relocating temporarily to a Masonic Temple. Don L. Cazier, who attended the Cleveland Branch with his wife Virginia, was called as branch president. The Cazier, along with Francis and Eden Webster, moved to the Lorain area from Cleveland to start and build up a new branch. Their faithful and pioneering labors included missionary work as well as administrative duties. These couples persevered and succeeded with the help of such long-time residents and members as Zada Lauther and W. Preston Cook.<sup>88</sup>

During the year 1955, two missionaries, the future Utah senator Elder Orrin G. Hatch and Elder Robert Christensen, were appointed to establish the **Sandusky Branch**. At the time, the branch mainly consisted of women. Elder Hatch was called as the first branch president, and

Elder Christensen soon after became the second branch president. Sunday meetings were held in Union Hall on Perkins Avenue in Sandusky. Members of the new Sandusky Branch included

the Dale Olsen family, the Freda Fischer family, the Donna Spino family, and the Elizabeth Good family. For a time, Dale Olsen was the only priesthood holder in the branch. The missionaries, along with these early families, worked hard to strengthen and enlarge the branch. Family names of some early converts in the Sandusky Branch were Aldrich, Cooley, Mendenhall, Williamson, Hensley, Peless, Rogers, Perdue, White, McNutt, Allen, Waltz, Baer, Miller, Morris, and Hinkle.<sup>89</sup>

### **East Side Branches Organized**

Two months after the formation of the Lorain Branch in 1955, the **Euclid Branch** was organized. The Euclid Branch was the first branch organized on Cleveland's East Side, and would later be known as the Cleveland East Ward. Roger A. Osborne was called as branch president. The first meeting of this branch was held at the Benjamin Franklin School located on East 215<sup>th</sup> Street and Wilmore in Euclid. Eleven members attended this meeting. A month after the organization, two missionaries arrived in the branch and spread their enthusiasm and missionary zeal. The missionaries had great hopes of increasing membership in the branch and quickly began to proselyte in the area. As President Osborne recalls, one of these elders could play the piano. However, the elder's repertoire consisted of only two hymns, "Thanks for the Sunday School" and "Welcome, Welcome, Sabbath Morning." Consequently, the Euclid Branch sang these two hymns solely and repeatedly. When a pianist finally moved into the ward, she was openly welcomed.<sup>90</sup>

Missionaries began holding cottage meetings in a YMCA in the Ashtabula area in 1959. Among the first members were Nancy Carleton, Bertha Van Akin, Ralph and Freda Booth, and Don and Thora Loper with their daughters Cheryl and Karen. They subsequently met at the fire hall in Geneva and were organized into the **Geneva Branch** sometime before 1961.<sup>91</sup>

### **Akron Area Branches Organized**

During the 1950s, the growth of the Church in the Akron area made it possible for other branches to be organized. The **Kent Branch** was formed on May 16, 1954, from a part of the Akron Branch. Wayne Bush was called as branch president, and the branch consisted of 34



members. Meetings were held at local schools. The name was later changed to the Kent-Ravenna Branch.<sup>92</sup>

The branch in **Youngstown** had been disbanded, but in 1954 it was reorganized with Don Brakeiron as branch president. The branch met at the back of a bakeshop. Some early members were the Quimbys, Brakeirons, Carmens, Barnetts, Mallorys, Markusics, Perkins, and Martins.<sup>93</sup>

In the **Sharon** area, a home Sunday School was formed on May 13, 1956, with Dr. P.C. Gillette as superintendent and Lloyd Craigo as assistant superintendent. In the summer of 1957, Sharon was organized as an independent branch with Dr. Gillette as branch president. There were approximately 44 members.<sup>94</sup>

On August 1, 1959, two missionaries, Elder Gary Stringham and Elder Douglas Hadley, arrived in New Philadelphia. By September, the first Sunday School for the **New Philadelphia** area was held at the old YMCA building on Tuscarawas Avenue in Dover. Twelve people were present. Late in September, the old VFW Hall on Fair Avenue, N.W., was rented for Sunday School meetings. The missionaries taught the teenagers and

adults, and Sister Cora Ethel Warner taught the small children. New Philadelphia was part of the Canton Branch, and sacrament meetings were held in Canton.<sup>95</sup>

Missionary Elders Cardon and Parrish arrived in **Wooster** in 1959. At that time Wooster was part of the Akron Branch. The missionaries

baptized Alice Kistler, Carl Frontz, and his young son, Eugene, on June 4, 1960. Alice's husband, Richard Kistler, and her mother, Nellie Mae Hoskins, were baptized a few months later. Family names of members in the area included Ferenbaugh, Steigerwald, Campbell, Starkey, Numbers, Watson, Newkirk, Uhl, and Smith. The Wooster Branch was organized in 1961 with Richard T. Kistler as branch president.<sup>96</sup>

The **Tri-City Branch** came into being at a district conference in January of 1961. Harry W. Headrick, Sr., recalled, "None of the Warren, Youngstown, or Sharon Branches could supply the necessary funds for a building, so we were combined and called Tri-City." Lloyd Craigo was called as branch president. About 125 branch members met at the Liberty School. The Tri-City Ward was organized in September of 1961, with William Davis as bishop. In 1961 the



*North Ohio District Priesthood – about 1957*

**Front Row (l-r):** George Hill, counselor; President Ruell E. Christensen, Great Lakes Mission

**Middle Row:** Reo Wright; William Eicker; Dwayne Keck; Clarence Winters; Laird Minnick; Steve Juhasz; Ralph Derks; Unknown; Larry Flory; Robert Baer; Richard Crisp

**Back Row:** Wilbur Griffith; Unknown; Jack Etter; Bob Peel; Wade Edwards; Robert Walsh; George Carmen; John Crowder



*North Ohio District Presidency & Council – early 1958*

**Front Row (l-r):** Bliss Vance; Frank A. Woodbury, president; Donald Patton; Reid Jensen, clerk

**Middle Row:** Bert VanWert; Unknown; Bro. Clemens; Bill Martin; Unknown; Harry Headrick

**Back Row:** Harley Hall; Richard Crisp; Glen Pont; Wade Edwards; Alma Jarrett; John Lusk; Forest J. Squire



**Akron Branch** became a ward when the Cleveland Stake was created.<sup>97</sup>

### North Ohio District Presidency – 1958



#### *North Ohio District Presidency*

**Front:** Forest J. Squire, first counselor; E. Doyle Robison, president

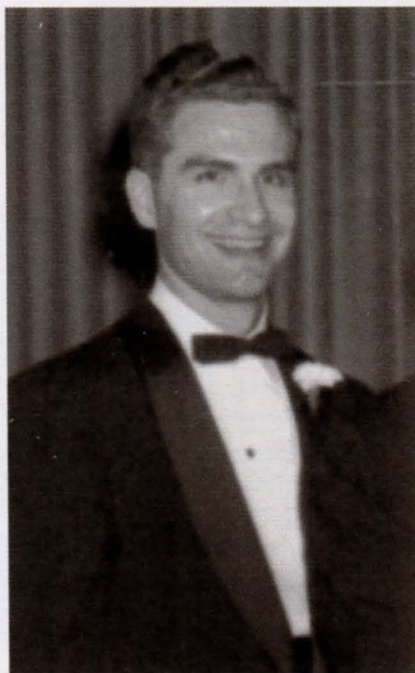
**Back:** Gordon Evans, second counselor; Raymond Lark, clerk

Several district presidents served in the North Ohio District from 1939 to 1961. E. Doyle Robison, who would later serve as the first stake president of the Cleveland Stake, was called to serve as district president in 1958 when Frank A. Woodbury was released. Forest J. Squire was called as first counselor, with Gordon Evans as second counselor, and Raymond Lark as the clerk. President Robison remarked that there were many relocated members, including dental and medical students from Utah attending the Western Reserve University. These members made up the bulk of the Cleveland Branch membership and were instrumental in helping the gospel to grow and develop in the Cleveland area.<sup>98</sup>

### The Cleveland Stake Organized – Stake President E. Doyle Robison (1961 – 1962)

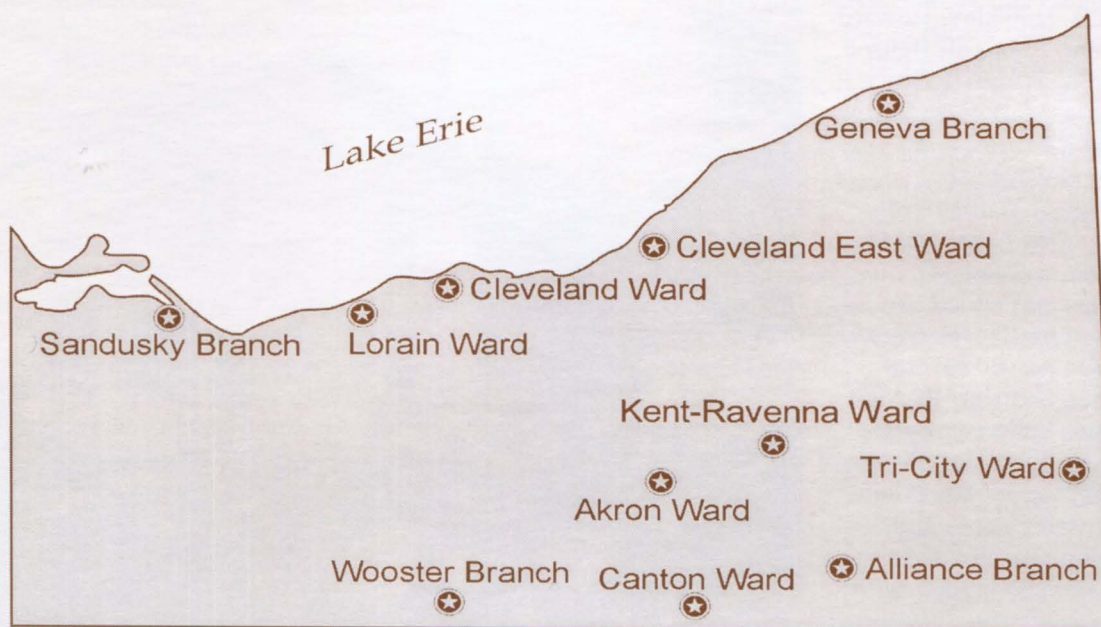
The Cleveland Stake was formed on September 20, 1961, by Elders LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles. The stake geographically contained much of the area of the original Kirtland Stake. E. Doyle Robison, the district president, was called as the first stake president in Northeast Ohio since the early Kirtland period. Also called were Forest J. Squire as first counselor, M. Brent Marriott as second counselor, and Ira T. Myers

as the stake clerk. At this time, the stake consisted of seven wards and four branches with a membership of 2,365. The wards and branches included: Akron Ward (452 members), Cleveland Ward (377), Tri-City Ward (348), Cleveland East Ward (319), Canton Ward (252), Lorain Ward (183), Kent-Ravenna Ward (123), Alliance Branch (109), Sandusky Branch (82), Geneva Branch (80), and Wooster Branch (40).<sup>99</sup> President Robison recalled the good spirit of Elder LeGrand Richards as he stood with Elder Franklin D. Richards for what seemed like hours, ordaining and setting apart members of the stake presidency, high council, and bishoprics. President Robison also remembers that the new leaders were so busy working on funds and buildings, and also on sharing, fellowshiping, and having fun, that they didn't have time for some of the "normal" concerns of running stakes and wards as we do today. He reminisced, "I suspect our Father in Heaven and all those guardian angels were cheering us on! Looking back, it was a marvelous time."<sup>100</sup>



*President E. Doyle Robison*





*Cleveland Stake Wards and Branches - 1961*

### **Stake President Forest J. Squire (1962 – 1974)**

Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve Apostles reorganized the stake presidency in September of 1962 when President Robison's work took him to New York City. Forest J. Squire was called as stake president, with M. Brent Marriott as first counselor, Robert F. Williams as second counselor, and Ira T. Myers as the stake clerk. President Marriott recalls that as they were assembled in the Relief Society room in the chapel on Lake Road, Elder Kimball would become very tired and lie down on the floor to take a fifteen-minute nap, then would wake up refreshed and carry on. President Marriott said, "He was very gra-

cious, thoughtful, and considerate, and made all of us feel comfortable with him."<sup>101</sup> The early leaders of the stake devoted much time to their callings and dedicated themselves to the work of the Lord. For the first stake conference, President Squire and his wife Gerry personally printed up, mimeographed, stamped, and mailed about one thousand letters to invite members to

attend the conference. Without executive secretaries and other support leaders, the stake presidency and their wives often found themselves taking on much of the work that was later assigned to other leaders.<sup>102</sup> Stake conferences were held in school buildings on the East Side of Cleveland in Orange, Akron, and the Kent-Ravenna area. The stake was fortunate to have many General Authorities speak at the stake conferences. Those who visited included Elders



*Cleveland Stake Presidency 1962  
M. Brent Marriott, first counselor;  
Forest J. Squire, president; Ira T. Myers, clerk;  
Robert F. Williams, second counselor*



Gordon B. Hinckley, Howard W. Hunter, Ezra Taft Benson, Spencer W. Kimball, Bruce R. McConkie, Mark E. Peterson, LeGrand Richards, and Franklin D. Richards.

President Williams was released when he moved to California, and Jerry O. Mortensen was called as second counselor. President Mortensen moved several years later, and Karl R. Anderson was called to replace him. These early stake leaders found themselves faced with many growing needs and responsibilities. Since many of the ward and branch leaders were new converts without substantial backgrounds in the Church, it was a learning experience for them every step of the way. As President Marriott expressed, "What we lacked in experience, we certainly made up for in enthusiasm and devotion."<sup>103</sup>

### Work Begins on the John Johnson Farm

Over the years, much attention was focused on recovering and renovating former Church properties in the Cleveland area. The Johnson farm in Hiram is one of these important properties. Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, visited the stake, and President Marriott took him on a tour of the Church historical sites including the Kirtland Temple and the Johnson farm. Upon his return to Salt Lake City, Elder Taylor presented to Church leaders a request that the Johnson farm be used as a stake welfare farm. The stake took over operation of the farm on January 1, 1971.<sup>104</sup> President Forest Squire recalled the ongoing process of the farm's transformation to a thriving Church welfare farm. He said:

This farm, located on Pioneer Trail in Hiram, Ohio, and consisting of about 180 acres of land, has much Church historical significance. . . . Even though the farm had been purchased by Brother Wilford Wood for the Church in 1956, it had been



*Elder Mark E. Peterson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles dedicated the Johnson home about 1969.*

leased for many years to a non-member tenant, and the house, barn, and other buildings were in poor shape. Old machinery, bed springs, stoves, etc. were rusting and scattered over the farm. The huge barn had not been cleaned of manure for many years, and it was stacked almost to the ceiling in the lower story. In the winter, the manure would freeze, and it was gradually pushing the foundation of the barn out. One of the first things we did when the lease expired was to marshal a crew of brethren to shovel by hand the manure that had accumulated in the lower part of the barn and spread it over the farm. It was estimated that we took over one hundred loads out of the barn. A junk dealer was contacted to remove all of the rusting machinery, which he did at no charge. A farm committee was formed to develop the farm for its best use. Wooster member Garth Cahoon, who was a member of the stake high council, had a doctorate in agronomy, and he headed the committee. Brothers and sisters throughout the stake were enlisted to help plant three acres of strawberries, five



acres of peaches, and fifteen acres of apple trees. . . . It seemed like the farm was a catalyst in getting everyone involved in Church work. One of the biggest projects was to jack up the barn and install a new foundation block wall under the huge barn. It took some real skills and the dedication of a lot of members to achieve the completion of this project, but we did one hundred percent of the work. In the rear of the farm we had about sixty acres of woods where a camping area was developed and many scouting events were

held. The first stake Primary day camp was held there, and Al Hintze built a rope bridge. Many scouting activities were planned for the scouts, and they had a wonderful time. One of the special events held at the farm was an Aaronic Priesthood commemoration when Elder Mark E. Peterson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and his wife attended, and Elder Peterson spoke to the priesthood holders. Sister Peterson played the portable organ that had been moved outside from the visitor's center."<sup>105</sup>

## John Johnson Home

Joseph Smith and his family lived at the John Johnson farm from September of 1831 to September of 1832. While there the Prophet did much of his work on the translation of the Bible. Sixteen revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants were received in Hiram, and eight special conferences were held there.<sup>106</sup> During a remarkable vision in the John Johnson home, the Prophet learned of the distinctive glories of the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were privileged to see God the Father and His Son in a heavenly vision:

And we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fullness; And saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and

ever (D&C 76:20-21).

It was at the Johnson farm that Joseph Smith was tarred and feathered by a mob. As a tragic consequence of the mob action, Joseph, one of the eleven-month-old Murdock twins adopted by Joseph and Emma, contracted a severe cold from exposure and died a few days later.<sup>107</sup> The

morning after being tarred and feathered, the Prophet Joseph Smith preached a sermon on the front porch of the home and baptized three individuals in the afternoon.<sup>108</sup>



A branch was organized

in Hiram in 1884 and met at the John Johnson home. President Ezra Taft Benson broke ground for a chapel on the Johnson farm on March 22, 1986.<sup>109</sup>



## Meetinghouse Constructions Begin

When Forest J. Squire became stake president in 1962, the stake was greatly lacking meetinghouses. The small chapel on Lake Avenue and the old Akron Branch chapel, which had been purchased from another church, were the only two buildings owned by the Church. Members of the other wards and branches met in rented buildings. In a short period of time, members helped in the building of a number of new meetinghouses throughout the stake. Full-size buildings were built in Akron, Westlake (stake center), and Mayfield Heights (Cleveland East Ward). Other chapels were constructed in phases. President Squire remarked, "It was a great joy to see buildings constructed in phases in the stake, most starting with the first phase, adding second and third phases, as funds became available."<sup>110</sup>

### *Akron Area Chapels Dedicated*

Several chapels were constructed in the Akron area. A groundbreaking for the first phase of the **Tri-City Ward** chapel was held on April 18, 1964. After many long hours of work by members, the chapel was completed in August of 1965. The dedication of the first two phases of the Tri-City Chapel took place on September 28, 1969. President Squire gave the dedicatory prayer. In the **Kent-Ravenna** area, land was donated for a chapel site on Hartville Road in Rootstown by Donald L. Lusk. In 1960 a special building fund meeting was held. One building project was quite unique. Members did odd jobs secured by putting ads in a local paper. They raised almost \$5,000 for the building fund on this project. Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on May 28, 1961, for the first phase of the building. A chapel addition was dedicated on January 7, 1967, by Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles. In **Akron**, ground was broken for a new chapel on 735 Revere Road. The old chapel on Locust Street, which had been purchased from another church, was sold to help finance the new building. The chapel was dedicated on January 7, 1967, by Elder Sill. The **Alliance Branch** met in an old house on State Street in Alliance when the building fund was started. The first phase of the chapel was built by labor missionaries with a supervisor. Members put in many long hours helping. The building was dedicated on May 19,

1968, by President Squire. Members in the **Canton** area had met in several buildings until the Church bought an old farm on 55<sup>th</sup> Street N.W. The members began meeting at the farm on March 2, 1958. They had prayed for a chapel to meet in since July 17, 1949, when the Canton Branch was organized. The members participated in several projects to raise money for the chapel, which was dedicated on October 26, 1969, by President Squire.<sup>111</sup>

### *First Chapel Built on the East Side of Cleveland*

A long-awaited chapel was constructed on Cleveland's East Side. On September 20, 1961, the Euclid Branch became known as the **Cleveland East Ward**. A chapel site was purchased in Mayfield Heights in 1962. The members held auctions of household goods, painted houses, sold Christmas trees, tore down buildings, and participated in several other projects. Many members also worked long hours on the construction of the building. Jack Hopper, LaVerne Osborne, and Darlene Williams were mentioned as three members who went the "extra mile." Roger A. Osborne recalls one night he and his wife went out to paint under the eaves of the building. The next day they discovered the paint had run off and was on the ground because it was too cold to adhere to the surface! Bishop Ramon E. Bassett commented, "Although the task, compared to our resources, seemed almost insurmountable at times, each member did his part toward building the Kingdom of God." The building was dedicated on June 1, 1969, by Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>112</sup>

### *Three Chapels Constructed on the West Side of Cleveland.*

The first phase of the **Lorain Ward** Chapel was dedicated on June 4, 1965. Other phases of construction would follow. John Gallacher was called as bishop in 1971. He remembers the great deal of financial sacrifice and donated labor that had gone into the building of the Lorain chapel. He said:

While construction was going forward, the ward was assessed a substantial amount of money for the building of the Washington Temple. This, along with





*Lorain Chapel*

other assessments, left a balance owed in excess of \$7,000. Given the ward's tithing and budget history, the amount owed was considered insurmountable. The wonderful Lorain Ward members rallied to the challenge to erase the deficit. Within a year, by virtue of "sacrifice dinners," auctions, and the introduction of donated labor at an ongoing book project, we were able not only to erase the debt, but start a chapel building fund. The two great benefits derived from this activity were a substantial increase in non-member, as well as member involvement, and a corresponding increase in spirituality.<sup>113</sup>

#### *Cleveland Stake Center Completed – 1968*

It was not long before the Cleveland Ward Chapel on Lake Road became too small for the increasing membership of the ward. Although the building was very dear to the members who had worked so hard to see it built, the chapel was sold to the Lutheran Church and stake leaders looked for a new place to build a larger chapel. For three years, the members met in the Horace Mann School and the Harding Junior High School in Lakewood for Sunday meetings. Relief Society, Primary, and Seminary were held at other locations.<sup>114</sup> The search for new property actually began as far back as 1961. A site on Kennedy Road in Cleveland was purchased in August of 1962, but in 1963, it was learned that the state had made changes to the plans for Interstate 480 and the property would be needed. Another prospective site on Hilliard Road fell through, until finally, the current property on Westwood Road in Westlake was purchased in December of 1965.<sup>115</sup>

A groundbreaking for the new Cleveland Ward Chapel was held on November 19, 1966. Once again, the Saints in the Cleveland area contributed money to the building fund as well as donated their time and labor to the actual construction. In order to raise money, the local members involved themselves in several projects including stuffing envelopes for the Halle Brothers, packing cameras for Polaroid, and making decorative grape centerpieces. Ray and Arlene Lark, De and Madelyn Thompson, and John and Gladys Center spearheaded the grape project. Sister Gladys (Center) Osborne remembers, "We advertised in newspapers and stores. We were also on the *Morning Exchange*, a local television program, and we had a booth at the Home and Flower Show. The project netted several thousand dollars."<sup>116</sup> The members assisted in the construction of the building by completing such jobs as back filling, laying tile and brick, varnishing, and painting the building. Bishop William A. Groesbeck, who had been called as bishop in 1964, took a special interest in the work on the building. He spent many hours at the site. Joe Fedor, a ward member who did much of the painting of the building said the one problem he had was to make Bishop Groesbeck understand that clean paint thinner was needed to clean out the spray guns. Bishop Groesbeck would save the old thinner and strain it. Brother Fedor gave up and bought his own paint thinner without telling the bishop. Brother Fedor said that the bishop thought only five gallons of paint thinner were used, when in fact the number was closer to thirty!<sup>117</sup> In total, ward members provided \$167,721 to the building fund, which was



*Cleveland Ohio Stake Center*





*President Forest J. Squire (center) at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Cleveland Stake Center. Bishop William A. Groesbeck is third from the left.*

approximately 25 percent of the total cost.<sup>118</sup>  
Bishop Groesbeck recorded in his journal:

In the fall of 1966, we started construction of our new building. The winter was wet and not too much was done, but in the spring the work went forward. It was thrilling to see a building rise and to see how the members responded. Typically our support was with a special few, but these were special Saints. They responded, and we built and paid for the

chapel. The building was finished and our first meeting was in March 1968. At last we had a home again.<sup>119</sup>

The chapel was formally dedicated three years later on June 20, 1971, by President Squire.

### *Dedication of the Sandusky Chapel – 1970*

The first building fund project for the Sandusky chapel was started in 1962 when the Relief Society sisters published a cookbook and raised \$150. This effort was followed by numerous bake sales, service projects,

rummage sales, and a roofing job on the Lorain Chapel. To obtain the goal of sacrament meeting attendance of one hundred members needed to initiate the chapel construction, faithful sisters made phone calls to members and provided transportation for them. The first phase chapel was finished in 1970 and dedicated by Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>120</sup> Jack Williamson, who was called to serve as the branch president in 1973, related the following:



*Youth Conference was held at Oberlin College in 1969*





*Sandusky Chapel*

When I was called to serve as the Sandusky Branch president in the winter of 1973, average Church attendance was under fifty. There was even talk of having to disband the branch even though we had a chapel. The branch leadership and the few active members we then had were busy just trying to meet the needs of one another and carry out the duties and programs of the branch. The biggest help came when the elders quorum presidency was taken out of the stake and given to each ward and branch. Our first elders quorum president was Robert Hansen. His counselors were Jack Jeffries and Steve McKee. These brethren had recently moved into our midst. In the month of January of 1975, Cleveland Stake President Karl Anderson challenged each ward and branch to obtain 100 percent home teaching in the month of February. The elders quorum presidency took to task the cleaning up of

our branch membership records by finding out who had left the area and where everyone else really was. Then they set out to make sure all existing families were given a home teaching visit. I remember that every member was reached in February with the exception of one brother who was out of town. We had even camped out on his porch steps to find him home! In the month of March, every family in the ward was visited. The importance of home teaching was brought to the branch members' attention, and the efforts of visiting teaching also improved. I sincerely feel that bringing the elders quorum into the wards and the home teaching (and visiting teaching) efforts that resulted was the key to our improved branch attendance of one hundred ten members. This enabled us to become a ward in the fall of 1975.<sup>121</sup>

### **Stake President Karl Ricks Anderson (1974 – 1978)**

In January of 1974, Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles reorganized the stake presidency. Karl Ricks Anderson was called as the new stake president. His counselors were Zane F. Lee and Carmen J. Libutti. President Anderson recalls:

There were two main objectives of our presidency; one consciously decided, and the other, I believe, evolved through



*Cleveland Stake Presidency – 1975*

*Left to right: Zane F. Lee, first counselor; Karl R. Anderson, president; Clayn R. Smith, second counselor; William A. Groesbeck, executive secretary. Clayn R. Smith replaced Carmen J. Libutti when he was called as the president of the Akron Stake.*



inspiration. Our conscious objective was to raise the level of home teaching in the stake. We had been promised if we would raise home teaching, the level of everything else would rise. That was literally true. We hit the ground running, so to speak, and within six months, in June, as I recall, we were over 90 percent in home teaching. This had a tremendous impact. The Akron stake could never have been created without it because with the increase came activation's, strengthening, and spirituality. The simple act of service brought a rewarding spirit and much new leadership. Also, as a result of the home teaching effort, hundreds of adult males who had never been ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood were ordained. In fact, we received a letter of inquiry from the Melchizedek Priesthood committee of the Church noting the great numbers that were being ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood and inquiring how it was being done. Essentially, it was all rooted in the effort we made on home teaching. The second objective that evolved through inspiration was the mission to build up the Church in this area, which essentially comprised all of the early Kirtland stake. In retrospect, I believe it was in literal fulfillment of prophecies made by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and others. During our presidency, we bought the first land in Kirtland that had been purchased by our Church since the Saints left in the 1830s. With the increased spirit of home teaching and service and rebuilding Kirtland came a huge increase in missionary work.<sup>122</sup>



*Washington D.C. Temple*

## **Washington D.C. Temple Dedicated – 1974**

A dream was finally realized in 1974 when the Cleveland Stake became part of the Washington D.C. Temple district. Gerry Squire shared her feelings about the Washington Temple. She said, "Until 1974, members would have to travel west to the Salt Lake Temple or the Arizona Temple. Members of the stake sacrificed and donated to the building fund of the Washington Temple, which was dedicated in November of 1974. It was a great blessing to have the first temple east of the Mississippi."<sup>123</sup>

## **Akron Stake Organized – 1975**

The Akron Stake was created from the southern parts of the Cleveland Stake on May 25, 1975. Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve Apostles presided at the conference. Carmen J. Libutti, a counselor to President Anderson of the Cleveland Stake, was called as the stake president. His counselors were N. Bruce Barlow and David W. Snyder. Clayn R. Smith was called as a counselor to replace President Libutti. The Akron Stake included the Akron 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, Akron 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, Canton Ward, Kent-Ravenna Ward, Tri-City Ward, Wooster Branch, and Alliance Branch. The Cleveland Stake was composed of the Cleveland 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, Cleveland 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, Cleveland 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward, Cleveland 4<sup>th</sup> Ward, Lorain Ward, Sandusky Branch, and Ashtabula Branch.<sup>124</sup>

The Cleveland 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wards had been created when the Cleveland East Ward was divided on January 31, 1971. The Cleveland 1<sup>st</sup> and the Cleveland 4<sup>th</sup> Wards had been created when the Cleveland Ward was divided on February 17, 1974.<sup>125</sup>



## President Spencer W. Kimball Visits and Initiates Property Purchase – 1976

In order to raise awareness about the Church throughout the Cleveland area, the stake planned an event entitled “What Makes Mormons Run?” at the newly built coliseum in Richfield on January 30, 1976. President Spencer W. Kimball accepted an invitation to visit and spoke at the conference. Sports figures Vernon Law and Harmon Killebrew attended. In addition, George W. and Lenore L. Romney, the Lamanite Generations singing group, astronaut Don L. Lind, and other prominent Church members were also on the program. A major effort was made to encourage each Church member to invite at least twenty non-members to the affair.



*President Spencer W. Kimball playing the pump organ at the Johnson home. Sister Camilla Kimball and Jean Stalnaker are in the background.*

The members were quick to rise to the challenge. Bill Barnard invited an inner-city church group and rented a bus to take them to the coliseum. Gordon Watts, a future president of the Cleveland Stake, also rented a bus, taking with him many people from his own neighborhood. President Watts' efforts resulted in the baptisms of at least two of the families that he had invited. About 7,000 members and 11,000 non-members attended, filling the coliseum to capacity. Baptisms resulting from this meeting are estimated to be over one thousand. In addition, President Kimball made initiatives after his visit that resulted in the acquisitions of the Whitney store and other properties in Kirtland. President Anderson declared, “The visit of President Kimball, I believe, was a major turning point in shifting the Church's focus back to Kirtland.”<sup>126</sup>

## Cleveland Fifth Ward and Kirtland Ward Created – June 5, 1977

At a quarterly stake conference on June 5, 1977, two new wards were created. Kirtland Ward was created from parts of the Cleveland 2<sup>nd</sup> and Cleveland 3<sup>rd</sup> Wards. The Cleveland 5<sup>th</sup> Ward was created from parts of the Cleveland 1<sup>st</sup>, Cleveland 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Cleveland 4<sup>th</sup> Wards.<sup>127</sup> Roger A. Osborne was called as bishop of the Cleveland 5<sup>th</sup> Ward, and Jack L. Davis was called as bishop of the Kirtland Ward. Bishop Davis told the members, “In the 38<sup>th</sup> section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we are given a clue as to why I, and many of you, came here: ‘Wherefore, for this cause I gave unto you the commandment to go to the Ohio.’ There is no doubt in my mind that the Saints who have now gathered in the Ohio were directed to be here by the Lord for the building up of this area.”<sup>128</sup>

## The Ohio Cleveland Mission Established – 1977

The Ohio Cleveland Mission, covering what is now the Cleveland, Akron, and Kirtland Stakes, was created on July 1, 1977. President and Sister Donald S. Brewer were called to preside. President Brewer stated that the mission's boundaries encompassed almost the same identical boundaries of the original Kirtland Stake of the late 1830s and early 1840s.<sup>129</sup> President Joseph H. Young, President R. Phillip Rasmussen, President Elmo Garff,



President Brent W. Lambert, President Frank N. Davis, President Gene B. Cross, President Steven D. Kohlert, and President Philip E. Jones, Interim President Stephen N. Hadley, and President Earl Rex Cutler would follow him as mission presidents.

For a time, an Ohio Akron Mission was formed. On July 1, 1984, Stanley M. Smoot opened the new mission. The mission included the Akron and Kirtland areas. President Smoot was followed two years later by President Kay Edmunds, who served as president for three years, at which time the mission was closed and included once again with the Ohio Cleveland Mission.<sup>130</sup>

### Ohio Cleveland Region formed - 1978

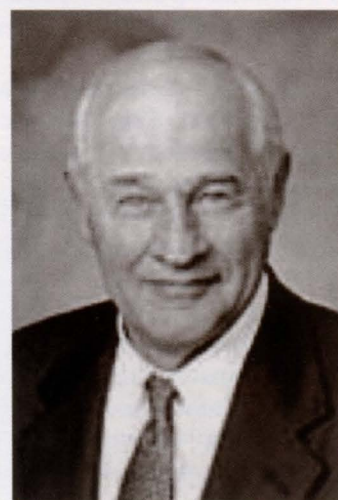
The Ohio Cleveland Region, which consisted of the northern Ohio stakes, was formed in 1978. The Church population for this area was about ten thousand members. Less than twenty-five years earlier, in 1955, there were only about one thousand members. Former Stake President Karl R. Anderson was assigned as the regional representative.<sup>131</sup>

### Gordon T. Watts Called as Stake President – 1978

Gordon T. Watts was called to replace Karl R. Anderson as president of the Cleveland Stake on October 8, 1978. Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles was the conference visitor. Elder Watts wrote:

I remember distinctly the interview with Elder James E. Faust, at a building on the East Side of Cleveland. The interview was short but special. . . . After meeting with Elder Faust, I began driving back home through downtown Cleveland. I was pondering my interview and a very spiritual thing happened. The still small voice said, "You will be called as the new stake president of the Cleveland Stake, and you need to identify two names as your counselors." I tried to dispel the thought, but it would not leave. What seemed like an instant later, that voice made known to me that the two brethren who should be called were William Groesbeck as first counselor and David Wiltbank as second counselor. I returned

home, shared my experiences with Sister Watts, and contemplated what was to transpire in the next few hours. Shortly thereafter, I received a call from President Clayn Smith of the stake presidency, asking that Connie and I come to the stake center to meet with Elder Faust. Elder Faust interviewed me and issued the call, then asked me to pray about counselors. I remarked that I had already received a confirmation on whom the counselors should be and gave him the names. The time we served together as a presidency was one of the most memorable experiences of my Church service.<sup>132</sup>



*President Gordon T. Watts*

The Cleveland 1<sup>st</sup> Ward and the Cleveland 4<sup>th</sup> Ward shared the stake center in Westlake. Partly due to the economic conditions at the time, there were many members moving out of the area. The Cleveland 1<sup>st</sup> Ward had six bishops between 1974 and 1979, and the Cleveland 4<sup>th</sup> Ward had seven bishops during these years. President Watts encouraged members to stay in the area and help build up the stake. Thomas O. Stubben was called as bishop of the Cleveland 4<sup>th</sup> Ward in 1979. He recalls a time when the ward faced a particular challenge. In a short two-year period, twenty-four families moved out of the ward. During that time, only four families moved into the ward. Bishop Stubben said:

We struggled to keep our ward together. Realizing that it would be difficult to do everything required, we decided to focus on home teaching, meeting our assignments at the Washington Temple, and meeting our ward financial commitments. In spite of the loss of active families, our home teaching continued to



lead the stake. The faith of the remaining ward members continued to amaze me. We met or exceeded our temple goals and budget assessments each year. We did this by extending the responsibility to as many members, active and inactive, as possible. It required additional sacrifices from the members, but these sacrifices provided an abundant return in blessings to the individuals, their families, and the ward by way of increased spirituality and an even greater testimony of the truth and beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>133</sup>

### **Missionaries Assigned to Kirtland, Ohio – 1978**

In January of 1978, under the direction of Mission President Donald S. Brewer, Elders Raymond S. Baum and R. Drew Galbraith moved into the upstairs part of the Whitney store, which was owned by Mrs. Lillian Wood of Bountiful, Utah.<sup>134</sup>

President Brewer wrote in his journal of a conversation with Sister Wood regarding having the missionaries stay at the Whitney store:

About mid-December I called Sister Wood on the phone, explaining our purpose and waited for her answer, which was rather startling and demonstrates once again that the Lord is in charge of the destiny of Kirtland. The following is what Sister Wood related to me: "Why certainly you have my permission to move the Elders into the store," she said. "You know why I

have held the store all these years since Wilford died? Because he told me back in 1964 that the Lord had made it known to him that the day would come when two missionaries would move into the upstairs of the Whitney store, and he, Wilford Wood, had better get out to Kirtland and purchase the store, so it would be

available." She then went on to tell me that he got on a plane the next day and went to Kirtland. He found the owner and finally arranged a selling price agreeable to both parties. That sum was about \$40,000. She said that Brother Wood had passed away some time since and how she wished he could have lived to see the day that his revelation was fulfilled.<sup>135</sup>

Preceding the move of the two missionaries to Kirtland, President Brewer met with President William Clinefelter of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Elder Baum and another

missionary, Elder John Valerie, also attended. Elder Baum wrote:

The topic of the Conversation centered around the moving of Mormon missionaries into the city of Kirtland. At the end of the hour and a half meeting the feelings and attitude of President Clinefelter concerning the above proposal can best be expressed in President Clinefelter's own words as he shook my hand. He said: "I take the stand of Gamaliel, the teacher of Paul, who, when

*"It would be gratifying to my mind to see the Saints in Kirtland flourish, but think the time is not yet come; and I assure you it never will until a different order of things be established and a different spirit manifested. When confidence is restored, when pride shall fall, and every aspiring mind be clothed with humility as with a garment, and selfishness give place to benevolence and charity, and a united determination to live by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord is observable, then, and not till then, can peace, order and love prevail."*

The Personal Writings  
of Joseph Smith

*History of the Church*, 4:166





*Missionaries R. Drew Galbraith and Raymond S. Baum  
in front of the Whitney store.*

questioned concerning what to do with Peter and the Apostles, said, 'And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God (Acts 5:38-39).'<sup>136</sup>

President Brewer instructed the missionaries not to proselyte at first, as there was a ban against it in Kirtland. The missionaries did historical research. Many Kirtland residents, not members of the Church, helped the elders collect the information. In 1978 Ohio had one of its worst recorded winters; however, the only days the elders did not go out was when a storm took the wind chill factor to one hundred degrees Fahrenheit below zero.<sup>137</sup> The ban was removed September 5, 1978, and the first baptism in Kirtland took place on February 3, 1979.<sup>138</sup>

### **The Scourge is Lifted**

Up until 1979, the members in Northeast Ohio were still living in an area placed under a scourge by the Lord (D&C124:83). President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, was sent to Ohio to break ground for a new chapel in Kirtland. He was met at the airport on Sunday morning October 14, 1979, by Karl R. Anderson, regional representative; Gordon T. Watts, president of the

Cleveland Stake; and Joseph H. Young, president of the Ohio Cleveland Mission. President Young recalled the drive in the car to Kirtland in his journal:

We greeted President and Sister Benson warmly and then moved rapidly to the car as we had only a short time to get to Kirtland. I drove while Elder Anderson opened a little history and read some prophecies to President Benson. Among other things he read Doctrine and Covenants 124:83, where the Lord says, "I, the Lord, will build up Kirt-

land, but I, the Lord, have a scourge prepared for the inhabitants thereof." Then he read the excerpt of Hyrum Smith's letter to the Saints in Kirtland (HC 4:443-444). . . . We were all impressed by



*President and Sister Ezra Taft Benson with Karl  
R. Anderson, regional representative.*



the Spirit. I then asked President Benson, "Have you ever heard of anyone lifting the scourge from Kirtland?" He said he hadn't, but thought it should be lifted. Then he asked Elder Anderson if he thought it was time to lift the scourge, and Elder Anderson answered, "Yes, I have

felt for a long time it was being lifted because things are going along so well." President Benson then asked President Watts, "Do you think the scourge is ready to be lifted," and President Watts said, "Yes, I have felt the same way as Elder Anderson." President Benson then asked

## Land Purchases in Kirtland, Ohio

While president of the Ohio Cleveland Mission in 1977, Donald S. Brewer wrote in his journal, "I am convinced a great work in spreading and teaching the gospel can be done in Kirtland as soon as we are able to put three or four of these historic sites together along with a visitors' center."<sup>139</sup> President Brewer worked diligently with President Karl R. Anderson to accomplish this goal. President Brewer wrote of President Anderson, "The Lord has seen [him] fit to lead and champion the cause and rebuilding of Kirtland."<sup>140</sup> He further stated, "No single influence on earth has worked harder, longer, and sometimes outside normal channels to accomplish what needs to be done."<sup>141</sup> In the spring of 1978, the Church purchased five acres of wooded area in Kirtland for a stake center. An additional adjoining 2.36 acres were purchased along the river.<sup>142</sup> Another major purchase in 1979 was that of the Whitney store, which was owned by Sister Lillian Wood of Bountiful, Utah.

As property purchases were made in the flats of Kirtland near the Whitney store, President Brewer wrote, "As I look back on the pattern that has been set, I can see how the Lord has guided us towards the flats area. Each time we have attempted to purchase a piece of property

up near the temple, we have met with failure. I am not entirely sure of the reasons, but apparently we have a greater future surrounding the Whitney store, at least for the present time."<sup>143</sup>

In 1980 the *Lake County News-Herald* reported that the Church had been buying land near the intersection of routes 306 and 615, known as the Kirtland flats area, to create a historic region of religious significance.<sup>144</sup> Karl R. Anderson, who was quoted in the article, said, "We expect that when the whole thing is complete it could attract 100,000 people a year, but truly we're not sure of that." He continued, "We've got most of what we wanted right now, and we're prepared to wait and be patient. This is sort of a divine purpose, and there is no hurry."<sup>145</sup>

President Brewer wrote of the project, "It is very difficult to put down on paper the myriad of details that go into a project of this proportion. Numerous phone calls, meetings, letter writing, a good deal of prayer, some fasting,

and a lot of perseverance are essential elements of any successful venture. This one has been no exception."<sup>146</sup>

As we enter the year 2000, plans are moving forward for a proposed historic Kirtland Village to be developed on the flats of Kirtland.



*Ohio Cleveland Mission President Donald S. Brewer and Cleveland Stake President Karl R. Anderson on the proposed Kirtland Ward site*



me how the missionary work was doing, and I said, "Fine, we seem to be doing more work than ever in the Kirtland area." He then asked for more details, which I gave him. Elder Anderson then read a dream Joseph Smith had in June of 1844, while he was in Carthage Jail, which was about him attempting to claim his home and barn in Kirtland (HC 6:609-610). For a brief moment I thought I could see the fulfillment of this dream in some things that have happened and are about to happen. The spirit was strong as we discussed all these great ideas. Then Elder Benson mentioned Doctrine and Covenants 83:14, how "Zion must increase in beauty, and in Holiness,"...speaking of Kirtland in the Lord's own due time."<sup>147</sup>

President Ezra Taft Benson broke ground for the Kirtland meetinghouse that Sunday morning, October 14, 1979. Following the groundbreaking, a meeting was held nearby at Lakeland Community College. Over five hundred members were in attendance. President Benson spoke about the area of Kirtland and its history, promises, and prophecies. In the dedicatory prayer, President Benson asked the Lord to lift the scourge.<sup>148</sup> He declared, "The scourge that was placed upon the people in that prophecy is being lifted today."<sup>149</sup> President Benson remarked, "We have a new day here, and a great opportunity ahead of us. I'm sure of it, because I have been pondering this. I'm sure that there is a new day, that the Lord is looking in on the people of this community because of your faith and your faithfulness and your interest in building the Kingdom."<sup>150</sup> Speaking of the growth of the Church in the area, he said, "Our

prophecy [Hyrum's Prophecy] said that yet your children may possess the Kirtland lands, but not until many years shall pass away. Those many years have, I feel, passed away. Now is the time

to arise and shine and look forward to great progress in this part of the Lord's vineyard."<sup>151</sup>

President Gordon T. Watts described his feelings; "It was as if a light broke through the heavens. Kirtland would never be the same."<sup>152</sup> Joseph F. Young, president of the Cleveland Ohio Mission, wrote in his journal, "The closing song was sung by the choir, then the congregation joined in singing 'The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning.' By this time we were all so moved that the building rocked with the sound of our singing."<sup>153</sup> Karl R. Anderson stated:



#### ***Zion's Camp Trail Run***

*In 1980, the Cleveland Stake participated in a Zion's Camp Trail Run from Kirtland to Independence, MO. Pictured about are Tony Marra, President Gordon T. Watts (1978-1980), and President William A. Groesbeck (1980-1990). Over four-hundred members in Ohio participated in the event.*

President Ezra Taft Benson's leadership and love for the Ohio area and the descendants of early members was indispensable in initiating the building up of Ohio. He consistently

set the example of love for Ohio ancestors and descendants alike. From 1979 to 1986, President Benson showed personal concern by making five trips to the Ohio area.<sup>154</sup>

#### ***Stake President William A. Groesbeck (1980 – 1990)***

On June 1, 1980, Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles called William A. Groesbeck to be the stake president after President Gordon T. Watts moved to Dallas, Texas. His counselors were David E. Wiltbank and Kenneth K. Bradford. Walter C. Selden replaced David E. Wiltbank when President Wiltbank moved from the area. When the Kirt-

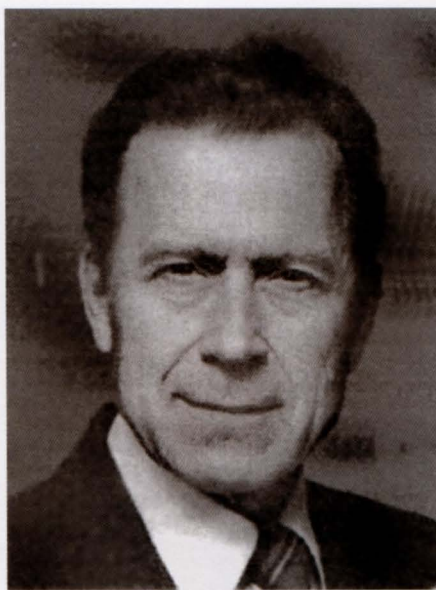


land Stake was created in 1983, Thomas O. Stubben was called as first counselor in the Cleveland Stake presidency, and Kenneth K. Bradford remained as second counselor. When President Bradford moved from the area in 1984, William G. Miles was called as second counselor. Douglas D. Wilson was called as second counselor in 1988 when President Miles moved from the area.<sup>155</sup>

### **Fifth Ward Chapel Dedicated – 1980**

The Cleveland 5<sup>th</sup> Ward was created in June of 1977. The ward first met at a Parma school, and then at the YMCA on West 25<sup>th</sup> Street. Plans were immediately started to build a ward meetinghouse. The members contributed to the building of their new chapel in Seven Hills. It was dedicated on July 17, 1980. President Groesbeck recalled:

I dedicated the Cleveland 5<sup>th</sup> Ward chapel on assignment from the First Presidency of the Church. We made arrangements with Bishop Roger A. Osborne for the special meeting and everything went fine. The bishop and others talked, all reflecting on the great experiences they had in building the chapel. The Spirit was present and to me it was one of those very special meetings. Many of the Saints in the ward were there when the chapel was built down on Lake Road in 1954, so we reminisced about memories over the years. I reflected, "what was your vision then of the future of the Church in Cleveland," and "what is your vision today." On this basis I commented that whereas today we have one stake in Cleveland, that in the next ten years we would see three



*President William A. Groesbeck*

*"Our  
challenge is  
indeed to  
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the Lord, that  
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builders of the  
kingdom."*

President William A.  
Groesbeck

stakes in this area. Our challenge is indeed to catch the vision of a mighty work, the work of the Lord that we are builders of the kingdom. . . . More and more I recognize the workings of the spirit of the Lord in this great work.<sup>156</sup>

### **Kirtland Ward Meetinghouse Dedicated - 1982**

The Kirtland Ward was created from the Cleveland 2<sup>nd</sup> and Cleveland 3<sup>rd</sup> Wards on June 5, 1977. The members first met at the Lakeland Community College for Sunday meetings. Homes, barns, and garages of member's

homes were used for auxiliary meetings. For a time, the Whitney store was used for auxiliary meetings; however, the fire marshal stopped the meetings there. The members met at several

other locations until a chapel was completed. An estimated \$150,000 was needed for a starting fund. Members were encouraged to develop projects using their talents and then donate the proceeds to the building fund. Families gave up vacations, sold property, and donated money saved for Christmas. Sacrifices were made and blessings were received. Ward members raised over \$300,000 for the ward building fund and contributed an additional \$55,000 to the stake building fund over a five-year period.<sup>157</sup>

On October 17, 1982, the Kirtland Ward meetinghouse was dedicated by President Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. President Benson spoke with much reverence about the Kirtland area and its lasting significance. He said, "I feel that I have been walking

on sacred ground . . . and my soul is subdued and my feelings rather tender. . . As long as the



Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints endures, and that will be forever, Kirtland, Ohio, will have great significance.”<sup>158</sup> Karl Anderson declared, “To be present at this dedication, which tangibly evidenced that the Church was returning to Kirtland was a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Many felt the presence of those beyond the veil.”<sup>159</sup> Zane F.

Lee, the building architect and a future president of the Kirtland Stake, stated, “When the choir and congregation sang the hymn ‘The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning,’ I felt at that moment that angels were singing with us and many beyond the veil rejoiced in the renewal of this work so long delayed.”<sup>160</sup>

### 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Revelation on the Word of Wisdom – Feb 17, 1883

On the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the revelation on the Word of Wisdom, a stake conference was held. Elder G. Homer Durham, one of the Presidents of the Seventy, was the conference speaker. In addition to the conference, a short anniversary program was held on the upper floor of the Whitney store where the revelation was received. Elder Durham spoke to the leaders assembled there. He said, “We are honored to be present on this historic day, and to be at or near the spot where the council of high priests was meeting when the revelation was made available.” In a brief prayer of thanksgiving, he expressed “a sense of deepening awe and appreciation for what has transpired in this building on many occasions.”<sup>161</sup>



**Kirtland Chapel**

*The Kirtland Chapel was burned to the ground from a fire set by an arsonist on May 4, 1886. A new chapel was built on the same spot, looking the same as the original. It was dedicated November 22, 1887, by President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency.*

### Special Priesthood Meeting - 1983

President Groesbeck wrote in his journal about a special priesthood meeting held before the organization of the Kirtland Stake. He recorded:

Tonight we had a special priesthood leadership meeting in the stake. It was a meeting where we as a presidency

counseled the brethren and then opened it up for a general priesthood meeting. For some time I had observed the influence of the adversary working on our leaders in one way or another and felt that a special testimony meeting would be good. I

sensed a parallel between events of today in Kirtland and those back in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Kirtland was a time of many spiritual experiences and one also opposed vigorously by the power of Satan. So today as the Church is reestablished in this historic spot, according to prophecy, we can see many events where the Lord is causing things to happen wherein this marvelous work can be accomplished. Likewise, I see

the workings of the devil and a need for us to prepare and be on guard. I explained my concern, noting that the purpose of the meeting was to build faith and testimony of the leaders in preparation for marvelous events which are and will unfold as we lead forth in this great work. The local leaders are here because God

***“We have only scratched the surface in that great charge that was given to us in those early days.”***

President Ezra Taft Benson



## Posterity Program

At the dedication of the Kirtland chapel, President Ezra Taft Benson stated, "They the ancestors served faithfully for many years here in this great area. . . . The prophet set the pattern, and as he loved them [the ancestors], we would strive to love the descendants."<sup>162</sup> Karl Anderson said, "Taking President Benson's lead, the Akron, Cleveland, and Kirtland Saints accepted a mission to seek out descendants of early members who still remain in the area. In this way it is felt that Joseph's prophecy will begin to be fulfilled."<sup>163</sup> Although the majority of the Saints left Ohio in 1838, many family members remained behind. Large numbers of inactive members and members who left the Church stayed in Ohio. It has been estimated that over 300,000 member descendants of these early members are still in the Cleveland, Akron, and Kirtland area. Many of these people are unaware of their Latter-day Saint heritage.<sup>164</sup> Bruce Walborn, a member of the high council, was called to plan and organize a reception for descendants of early Church members at the dedication of the Kirtland Chapel. Brother Walborn said:

We thought, what would happen if we found this posterity, and what could happen if we told them we thought they were connected in some way with the Mormon pioneers? What would happen, then, if we told them we would help them search out their genealogy and discover if that was really true? And, if all of this took place, would they become inspired in some way? Would they be drawn closer to the gospel? Would, in fact, their own ancestors on the other side of the veil inspire them and prompt them to read the Book of Mormon? What a marvelous thing this could be! With those thoughts in mind, we began our search in earnest.<sup>165</sup>

Links were established to 105 early Kirtland



**Top (l-r):** President Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency; President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; and Karl R. Anderson, regional representative at a Kirtland Heritage Days Posterity Luncheon.

**Bottom:** President Gordon B. Hinckley accepts and displays the original key to the Whitney store presented by Sanford Booth on August 25, 1984, at the Heritage Days Posterity Luncheon. Karl R. Anderson and his wife, Joyce, are on the left.

Stake family names. Over 600 non-members attended the reception held in their honor following the dedication of the Kirtland chapel. President and Sister Benson were honored guests at the reception.<sup>166</sup>

has brought us here for this time. We will succeed but we must polish our armor

of righteousness in order to withstand the fiery darts of the adversary.<sup>167</sup>



## Kirtland Stake Organized - 1983

The Kirtland Stake was organized by President Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles on October 16, 1983. Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the Quorum of the Seventy and Elder Karl R. Anderson were assigned to assist President Benson. Four eastern units of the Akron Stake (Tri-City 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, Tri-City 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, Sharon Branch, and New Castle Branch), and the eastern half of the Cleveland Stake (Cleveland 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, Cleveland 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward, Kirtland Ward, and Ashtabula Ward) were combined to form the new Kirtland Stake. Zane F.

Lee was called to serve as president. The Kirtland Stake would consist of the Kirtland Ward, Cleveland Heights Ward (Cleveland 2<sup>nd</sup>), Mayfield Ward (Cleveland 3<sup>rd</sup>), Ashtabula Ward, Tri-City 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, Tri-City 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, Sharon Branch, and New Castle Branch.<sup>168</sup> President Groesbeck wrote in his journal:

On Sunday morning it was my privilege to conduct the conference. As I had pondered my remarks for the day, I had some very special feelings about the events of the day and the portrait of the future of Kirtland. The spirit of the occasion was beautiful. One thought was especially strong and that was that I felt there was a striking parallel between the events of Kirtland yesterday and Kirtland today. The Prophet was prayed to Kirtland in his day. It was there that the Saints had opportunity for sacrifice and received great blessings and spiritual experiences. Out of these faithful Saints were called the first members of the Quorum of the Twelve and other great priesthood leaders. The Saints were prepared to move on

and lay the foundation of the Church in a very significant way preparatory for the building up the Kingdom of God here on the earth. So likewise in our day it has

been the faith and prayer of the righteous and probably departed spirits that have moved upon the people to come to Kirtland. Priesthood leaders here today have a feeling of destiny and have come here because they felt that the Lord wanted them here. So today, out of their crucible of faith and twentieth-century pilgrimage to build up Kirtland, I see a people tried and true. I

see a new generation of valiant priesthood leaders; even general authorities of the Church, and in due time another temple.<sup>169</sup>

On this occasion, President Groesbeck and Elder Anderson, the regional representative, spoke to a congregation of more than 1,800 members at the Kirtland Stake Center. President Groesbeck remarked, "Kirtland shall rise. I don't just mean this immediate area of Kirtland, but I think, of all of northeastern Ohio. This area shall rise and follow the Lord. What a blessing that is to us."<sup>170</sup> Elder Anderson spoke of the prophecies concerning the Kirtland area saying, "When we think of the prophecies, brothers and sisters, let us not forget one thing. . . . The prophecies were made, and they will be fulfilled, with us or without us. . . . It is those of us here today who are going to have to see that they are fulfilled."<sup>171</sup> Elder A. Theodore Tuttle remarked, "There is also, I know, a special spirit here, and I want you to know that it isn't just here, I think it is in all of 'the Ohio' and in this whole general area. Now you should know that." He further remarked:



*(l-r): Roy A. Williams, president of the Akron Stake; Karl R. Anderson, regional representative; Sister Flora Benson; President Ezra Taft Benson; William A. Groesbeck, president of the Cleveland Stake; Zane F. Lee, president of the Kirtland Stake; and A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Quorum of Seventy*



Elder John A. Widtsoe said, "The seen and the unseen world are closely connected, one assists the other." . . . There are other leaders of the past who look in on this service. Because of what has transpired [in Kirtland's past], more, much more is going to be required of us. . . . We must have a perspective of history that permits us to look back and to gather knowledge so that we can put the present in proper perspective. That surely with that knowledge, we can see and project what all of us must do as members of the Church . . . in this choice area. . . . We can look back and talk about it or we can take a renewal of the commitment to emulate the faith of those great people.<sup>172</sup>

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Elder A. Theodore Tuttle

President Benson reiterated that growth will take place and that the prophecies of rebuilding are coming to pass. He told those assembled for the conference, "We have only scratched the surface in that great charge that was given to us in those early days." He continued, "But I rejoice because I feel there is a new spirit here in this beloved Kirtland area and in the entire state of Ohio." He further told the Saints, "I promise you as a servant of the Lord that as you unite in moving the work of the Lord forward in this part of the Lord's vineyard, your prayers will be answered and you will be magnified even beyond your natural talents."<sup>173</sup>

### Cleveland Stake – October 1983

At the stake conference on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, the names of the area wards had been changed to identify them with their local communities. After the establishment of the Kirtland Stake, the Cleveland Stake consisted of the Westlake 1<sup>st</sup> Ward (formerly Cleveland 1<sup>st</sup> Ward), Westlake 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward (formerly Cleveland 4<sup>th</sup> Ward), Seven Hills Ward (formerly Cleve-

land 5<sup>th</sup> Ward), Lorain Ward, and Sandusky Ward.<sup>174</sup> President Groesbeck assured the stake's members:

I remain as president of the Cleveland Stake. It will be different and challenging. We have less experience to call on, but in staffing our stake I feel confident of success. It is possible that our lack of experienced personnel may be our greatest blessing, because if we are humble and call upon the Lord, He will bless and magnify our talents, and we shall be equal to every challenge. With such a spirit, and only with this spirit of leadership can we grow.<sup>175</sup>

On October 16, 1983, the presidency of the Cleveland Stake sent a letter to President and Sister Benson. President William Groesbeck and his counselors Thomas O. Stubben and Kenneth Bradford wrote in the letter:

We are witnessing a new beginning and a day of spiritual renaissance. This hallowed part of the Lord's vineyard, having lain fallow for many years under the curse of apostasy, has now been pruned. The curse has been lifted and this fertile land is preparing to yield a bounteous harvest of souls as it assumes its great latter-day role in the building up of the Kingdom of God. The spirit of the Lord is moving upon this people to open the eyes of their understanding to the eternal truths of the gospel. The Spirit of the kindred dead is active among their descendants causing them to establish their identity and claim their inheritance in Zion. The workers are willing and anxious. Through this divine service Kirtland shall indeed rise again to fulfill its divine destiny as a center of strength in the Church.<sup>176</sup>





#### *Scout Encampment*

*A Scout encampment was held at Beaumont Scout Camp on June 18-24, 1983. Elders L. Tom Perry, A. Theodore Tuttle, and Vaughn J. Featherstone attended the encampment for all priesthood youth in the North Central Area of the United States. Pictured above is the Scout encampment committee. Karl R. Anderson, regional representative is in the center of the first row.*

#### **Newel K. Whitney Store Dedicated - 1984**

After the purchase of the Whitney store by the Church, it was fully restored back to its original appearance. President Ezra Taft Benson, under the direction of President Gordon B. Hinckley, dedicated the Newel K. Whitney store on August 25, 1984. In President Benson's dedicatory prayer, he called the store "a hallowed place of glorious revelation." President Benson said, "I'm satisfied that the growth and progress in Kirtland is most satisfying to the Lord."<sup>177</sup> President William A. Groesbeck wrote:

There was a dedication of the Whitney store in Kirtland today by President Ezra Taft Benson. Thus concludes what has been a massive uphill battle to obtain Kirtland properties

and begin to establish a visitor center in this historic area. It was an impressive event with the assembly of more priesthood authority than any other time since the days of the Prophet Joseph. A prayer

meeting was held, prior to the dedication, in the upstairs room of the store known as the room where the School of the Prophets was held. Present were President Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency; President Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; Elder Rex C. Reeve, our area president; Karl Anderson, regional representative; Zane Lee, president of the Kirtland Stake; Roy Williams, president of the Akron Stake; William Groesbeck, president of the Cleveland Stake;



*President Benson speaking at the dedication of the Whitney store*



Phillip Rasmussen, president of the Ohio Cleveland Mission; President Stanley M. Smoot of the new Akron Mission; and Florence Jacobson of the Church Historian Office. The wives of President

Hinckley and President Benson were also present. . . . Many hearts were touched by the spirit of the occasion, and I am sure many converts will result.<sup>178</sup>

## Newel K. Whitney and Co. Store

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February in 1831, a sleigh containing four persons drove to the front of the Whitney store. Joseph Smith walked into the store where Newel K. Whitney was standing, and holding out his hand, exclaimed, "Newel K. Whitney! Thou art the man!" "You have the advantage of me," replied the merchant, "I could not call you by name as you have me." "I am Joseph the Prophet," said Joseph, smiling. "You've prayed me here, now what do you want of me? The Prophet, while in New York, had seen the Whitneys in a vision, praying for Joseph to come to Kirtland (HC 1:146).

Joseph Smith and his family moved into rooms in the upper story of the Whitney store in September of 1832. For about eighteen months, this store served as headquarters of the Church. During this time, the Prophet finished his work on the translation of the Bible, and

seventeen revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants were received here.<sup>179</sup> The ordinance of the washing of feet was given here for the first time in this dispensation. Several of those present experienced "divine manifestations of the Holy Spirit" (HC 1:323-324).

On March 18, 1833, the First Presidency of

the Church was organized and given the keys of the Kingdom (D&C 90:6, HC 1:334). Elder M. Russell Ballard stated, "Many saw the Savior. Both the Father and Son were present as well as concourses of angels that day."<sup>180</sup>

The store also served as a post office and the first bishop's storehouse. Joseph Smith conducted the School of the Prophets in an upstairs room. It was referred to as the 'House of God' in the Doctrine and Covenants Section 88. The revelation on the Word of Wisdom, the initial command to build the Kirtland Temple, and much of the subsequent planning occurred here.<sup>181</sup> Joseph Smith III was born in an upstairs

bedroom on November 6, 1832. He was the fourth of nine children born to Joseph and Emma, but the first to grow to adulthood.<sup>182</sup>

After the Saints left Kirtland, the Whitney store was sold and used for a variety of purposes, including that of post office, restaurant, hotel, tavern, and political

headquarters.

In 1979 the Church acquired the store to develop and preserve as a historic site. In 1988 the President's Historic Preservation Award was given to Church authorities in a ceremony at the White House in recognition of the excellent restoration of the Whitney store.<sup>183</sup>





## Plans Announced for the Toronto Temple - 1986

The Saints in the Cleveland Ohio Stake had been assigned to the Washington Temple district until President Groesbeck received word that the Saints would now be in the district of the newly announced Toronto Temple, yet to be built. President Groesbeck wrote in his journal in January 1986:

For the past two or three months, I had been contemplating our stake participation in raising funds for the Toronto Temple. There has been considerable delay, and as yet we have no official direction to solicit funds. The Kirtland Stake started about six months ago asking the members to start on a voluntary basis only. At the time I held off because I thought we would soon get specific assignments. Now in view of the delay, I felt good about going ahead on a voluntary basis and my counselors agreed. So I prepared a letter to all members of the stake in which I explained the situation and extended the invitation to voluntarily start making monthly payments. As I wrote the letter, there was a special spirit about it, and at the end I promised them in the name of the Lord that whatever they chose to give in this spirit would be returned to them four fold. After I wrote down four fold, I thought that seemed kind of bold, so I crossed it off and put in two fold. As I did, so the thought came into my mind, "Who are you to deprive the members of a four fold blessing?" Well I pondered that a moment, and then said, "Sorry Lord," and changed it back to four-fold. It felt good and right. I continually find that being an agent of the Lord is a humbling yet most rewarding experience. I feel it was also a lesson not to stand in the way of blessings the Lord would like to bestow upon



*Toronto Temple*

the members as they prove themselves faithful.<sup>184</sup>

The temple was dedicated in 1990.

## Bishop's Storehouse Opened – February 13, 1986

A bishop's storehouse was opened in Brecksville on February 13, 1986. The storehouse would serve the Cleveland, Kirtland,

Akron, Pittsburgh North, and Pittsburgh stakes, as well as the Dubois Mission District. President Groesbeck recorded:

Our bishop's storehouse opened today, and I went out to visit and see how things were going. It is located in a nice new building, and the managers were two old-time families here in the area. As I entered the door, I felt

a sweet spiritual influence. This was the Lord's storehouse, and His spirit was there. Touring the facility, I was impressed with its orderliness and well-stocked shelves. Then there were the Saints coming in to receive needed assistance. What a marvelous and inspired system to provide for the needy in a kind, loving, and dignified way. I hope all feel that same spirit when they enter the doorway of the Lord's storehouse.<sup>185</sup>

## Boundary Changes in the Cleveland Stake – 1986

On September 28, 1986, ward boundaries in the Cleveland Stake were adjusted to form the Cleveland Ward, Westlake Ward, North Olmsted Ward, and Seven Hills Ward from the Westlake 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, Westlake 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, and the Seven Hills Ward.

Jerry M. Harston served as bishop of the Seven Hills Ward from 1989 to 1994. He spoke of the members of the ward. He remarked:

Shortly before I was called to be bishop, I was asked to go with the Young Women





*The Seven Hills (Cleveland 5<sup>th</sup>) Ward Chapel was dedicated in 1980.*

of the stake on their 4<sup>th</sup> year hike. It was not a hike at all but a very long canoe trip. On the second morning after breakfast, all the young women, Sister Marion Groesbeck, the stake Young Women's president, several young women leaders, and I started paddling. We paddled all morning and into the afternoon. I don't know about the girls, but as for me, I was getting a little tired about mid-afternoon. Finally the girls decided to head back to return the canoes to the livery where we had rented them. It was a considerable distance back. After paddling a couple of hours we all grouped the canoes together out in the middle of the lake to have a snack and rest. Then some observant person noticed that the wind was blowing in approximately the same direction as the canoe livery. Some inventive person suggested that we hold the canoes together, use the paddles and towels to make sails. After trying that for a while, we noticed that we were moving along as fast as before with only a fraction of the effort as it would have been if each canoe were paddling back to our destination alone. There were five canoes with two people in each canoe. Some held the sails, two sails in front and one sail toward the rear of the cluster of boats.

Some individuals only assignment was to hold the canoes together. Some on the outside edge near the rear would occasionally need to paddle one side or the other to true up our course. This worked amazingly well. I observed that all of the twenty hands in those five canoes were doing something critical for the total group. Then an interesting thing happened. We discovered that by merely dragging the paddle one side of our cluster we could change the course of the cluster and if the person dragging the paddle got to the point where we no longer traveled toward the livery but headed somewhere totally different than our destination. Then the thought occurred to me, how like our ward this canoe cluster is. Not everyone was in a position to steer or do something really important like hold the sail, but everyone was critically important to the total group, even those who did nothing more than hold the canoes together. After I was called to be bishop, I had the strong impression that this experience was a pattern or similitude of what we needed to happen in the Seven Hills Ward. As we strived to accomplish this, we recognized



*President William A. Groesbeck and his wife Marion with Elder Richard G. Scott, Quorum of Twelve Apostles. President Groesbeck would be called as a regional representative. Marion served as the stake Young Women's president for seventeen years.*



the hand of the Lord in much of the work that was done and we observed the power of God in many instances.<sup>186</sup>

### The North Olmsted Ward - 1986

Kevin D. Burnett was called as the first bishop of the North Olmsted Ward in 1986. He remembers:

The ward had the assignment to raise \$17,000 for the new Toronto Temple in a short time period. That was in the days when members paid ward budget and missionary funds in addition to tithing. We were a small ward and not really an affluent ward. As bishop, I felt a heavy burden regarding this assignment and knew that many of the ward members were already giving a large percentage of their income to the Lord's work. I remember feeling the spirit very strong the day that I got up in sacrament meeting and after reading the letter from President Groesbeck asking for our commitment, bearing testimony as to the blessing that would come to our ward for being obedient. The members of the North Olmsted Ward responded most remarkably. Not only did we make our assessment, but we also went several thousand dollars over. The money did not come just from the few wealthy families in the ward. Many members truly sacrificed for the temple to be built. I recall one family coming into the bishop's office and committing their family's vacation money that they had been saving for a long time. Another family gave up purchasing a new car that they had been saving for and donated the money for the temple. Family after family made similar commitments. Once again, I was humbled to think that I worried that we would not make our commitment. The faith of the North Olmsted Ward members was tremendous. Over the years, I saw that same faith manifested over and over in the many acts of service that were rendered, the willingness to accept difficult and challenging callings, and the way many of the ward members overcame problems and trying situations in their lives. Missionary work thrived, and we were blessed with some wonderful converts. Temple work

was also another area where the faith of the members was demonstrated over and over.<sup>187</sup>

### Elyria Chapel Dedicated - 1988



*Elyria Ward Chapel*

The Elyria Ward chapel was dedicated on May 22, 1988. The ward had been organized on October 23, 1983, when the Lorain Ward was split. Before they had their own chapel, the members of the ward had met at Midview High School, Belden Methodist Church, and the Lorain Ward chapel. Steven R. Huff was called as bishop in 1995. He wrote of an experience he had as bishop:

Early on in my tenure I became greatly concerned about the large number of welfare cases in our ward. I devoted much energy to finding solutions to the various challenges with which we were faced, but nothing seemed to have much of an effect. We gave out much more in welfare support than we took in as fast offerings. In the course of my first tithing settlement, I was surprised and saddened to discover how few of our ward members contributed to the fast offering funds. Many members were full tithe payers, but they did not enjoy the blessings of the fast. As we met for tithing settlement, I read to each family the promises to those who observe the fast as they are recorded in Isaiah Chapter 58. At the same time, I remembered that as a youth and young Aaronic Priesthood holder, I had participated in collecting fast offerings on the first Sunday of every month. This was a practice currently not being observed in the Elyria Ward. . . . We announced the plan [to do this] at our next welfare meeting. There was some discussion. . . . The following Fast Sunday we sent the



Aaronic Priesthood youth out for the first time to collect fast offerings. After little more than a month, our fast offering funds rose above the welfare expenditures. To a great extent, this was not a direct result of the additional money being collected. Rather, numerous events took place that reduced the needs of those on welfare. The Lord was blessing us for doing our part.<sup>188</sup>

### **Stake President Douglas D. Wilson (1990 – 1997)**

Elder Richard G. Scott called Douglas D. Wilson as president of the Cleveland Ohio Stake on March 18, 1990. His counselors were Thomas H. Rice and Rees C. Madsen. Speaking at the conference, President Wilson stated:

I know that God lives and that Jesus is our Master and Savior and that through him we can repent of our transgressions and achieve exaltation in the Kingdom of our Heavenly Father. So with your help and following the path that President Groesbeck has made and with your help in holding the light, we can proceed with



*The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has given permission for the Church to meet in the Kirtland Temple on several special occasions. On January 24, 1992, the Tabernacle Choir performed at the Cleveland Public Auditorium. During this visit they were privileged to sing in the Kirtland Temple.*



*President Douglas D. Wilson*

confidence, knowing that Heavenly Father will not lead us into danger.<sup>189</sup>

The stake presidency continually emphasized individual spiritual strength. In a letter to ward and stake leaders, the stake presidency wrote:

Sanctification Through Temple Attendance – This is the vision that we hope to establish in the Cleveland Ohio Stake. This vision is one of a balanced effort to shepherd all those who reside within our stake boundary to a path that leads to personal sanctification.<sup>190</sup>

Prior to his death, William A. Groesbeck, then a regional representative, had been asked by President Wilson to plan an expansion of the Family History Center in the stake center. Previously, the center had occupied only two very small rooms just inside the east door. Elder Groesbeck formed a committee and laid plans to quadruple the size of the center. After Elder Groesbeck's death, President Wilson carried out the carefully laid plans and completed the expansion of the center.<sup>191</sup>

### **Cleveland Ward Chapel Dedicated – 1995**

Bishop James T. Ash, who had been the bishop of the Westlake 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, was called as the first bishop of the new Cleveland Ward. The new ward's first meeting was held on





*Cleveland Ward Chapel*

October 12, 1986. For a time the ward met at Emerson Middle School and at the Seven Hills chapel before moving into their new building. President Wilson stated, "An exhaustive effort to purchase land to build a chapel for the Cleveland Ward was unsuccessful. Therefore, the Junior Achievement building on East 117<sup>th</sup> was purchased, renovated and dedicated for that purpose."<sup>192</sup>

William Mercker was called as bishop of the Cleveland Ward in 1993. He spoke of his feelings for the ward members:

The growth and accomplishments of the Cleveland Ward are due to the love we have for one another, and it is the presence of the spirit within each of us that fosters that love. Here are some examples.

The first year the ward was organized, we surpassed our temple goals, not because we had a strong desire to reach 100 percent, but because we wanted to support and share in the joy of our members as they were married, sealed, and as they received their own endowments in the temple. One day the ward members worked over 180 hours at the Johnson farm, not just to log hours,

but because it was an opportunity for our children to play together, our youth to feel the spirit of service, our adults to fellowship one with another, and because there was lots of good food there. To date our record is thirty splits in one week and ninety-nine in one month, not because we like to set records, but because it is our desire for every adult in the ward to have at least one spiritual experience with the missionaries each month. The legacy of the Cleveland Ward is that we really are a family. We really do support, care, and love one another.<sup>193</sup>

### **Stake President Thomas H. Rice (1997 – Present)**

Sister Helen Wilson, the wife of President Douglas Wilson, died on June 8, 1997. The stake presidency was reorganized two months later, and Thomas H. Rice was called as stake president. K. Wade Tolman and Kenneth R. Ervin

were called as his counselors. President Rice grew up in the Cleveland area. He recalled:

I have personally witnessed most of what has occurred in our stake since 1961, save a few years. Through those early years I was young and did not fully

appreciate all that happened, but vivid in my memory are those days working along side my father and brother helping to build the early chapels in Akron, Canton, Mayfield, and our own stake center. We helped with the original plantings and work at the John Johnson farm. Leaving for the mission field from our stake was a special moment in my life. I was baptized



*Cleveland Stake Presidency – 1997*

*(l-r): Daryl H. Miyasaki, clerk; K. Wade Tolman, first counselor; Thomas H. Rice, president; Kenneth R. Ervin, second counselor*



in the font under the stage of the Lake Avenue chapel along with my sister Rebecca and my brother Mark. My parents were baptized a week earlier. Brother Raymond Lark ordained my father a deacon. From those early years until now we have been truly blessed.

I have seen the challenges that faced the Saints in those early years of growth. I know that it was their faith and the vision of inspired leaders that the work of the kingdom has moved forward. My father often marveled at the leadership of President Squire. Bishop Groesbeck and his family became special friends of the Rice family. We have felt the love of President Anderson and President Watts. These great men continue to bless our lives. Serving almost eight years with President Wilson and President Madsen has influenced my life forever. I love these two great men.

From 1997 through the present our vision is to press forward and to invite all to 'come unto Christ.' With the knowledge and testimony that the Lord will magnify our efforts as we exercise our faith, we are confident that the Lord's Kingdom will continue to move forward. There is much to do; however, we sense an urgency to focus on temple worthiness and attendance, home teaching, family home evening, and Christlike service to one another and within our communities.<sup>194</sup>



*Columbus Ohio Temple*

### **Columbus Temple Dedicated – September 4-5, 1999**

The Columbus Temple was dedicated on September 4<sup>th</sup> under the direction of President Gordon B. Hinckley. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve, and Elder Loren C.

Dunn of the Seventy were also present. The temple was the first to be dedicated in Ohio in 163 years. It was the Church's 60<sup>th</sup> operating temple. The temple district includes northern Ohio, central Ohio, and the western part of West Virginia.

President Gordon B. Hinckley speaking at the second dedicatory session said, "The Church will continue to grow in this area. Whereas we have

thousands, we will have tens of thousands [of members]. I don't know if some day we will have more temples in Ohio. Cleveland is a big



*President Gordon B. Hinckley prepares to seal the cornerstone of the Columbus Ohio Temple as Elder L. Tom Perry and Elder Loren C. Dunn watch.*



city. Cincinnati is a big city. I foresee the day when we might have temples in both.”<sup>195</sup>

### Historical Kirtland Village

The Church has announced plans to rebuild and restore several landmarks in Kirtland. Karl R. Anderson and others have worked tirelessly to help bring it about. The village will be built in the flats around the present restored Whitney store. The Chardon and Chillicothe Roads will be relocated around the village. The project will include the rebuilding of the John Johnson Inn and the restoration of the Newel K. Whitney home and an early schoolhouse, tannery, and ashery. A visitors’ center will be built to resemble a 19<sup>th</sup>-century gristmill and will contain a 120-seat theater and two smaller theaters. Dedication ceremonies are projected for the year 2003.

President Donald S. Brewer, the first president of the Ohio Cleveland Mission, wrote in 1979:

Kirtland is like a rusted treasure chest, lying for many years half buried in the sand. You want to hurry and open it up and view the treasure inside, because you know it contains precious jewels. But you also want to preserve the valuable chest that has so long guarded and kept safe the treasure. We choose to open it carefully and prayerfully.<sup>196</sup>

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has stated, “It has been said that we may yet discover that Kirtland is our most significant Church history site.”<sup>197</sup>

### Looking Toward the Future

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Northeast Ohio has emerged from humble beginnings and now continues to grow in strength and membership. There are now three stakes in the area. The prophecies remain intact. This area will continue to grow. More stakes will be created, and as President William A. Groesbeck foresaw, in time we look forward to having a temple built in this area.

In April of 2000, the Cleveland Ohio Stake consists of seven wards with a total membership of 2,726. The wards include: Cleveland (501 members), Elyria (452), Lorain (346), North Olmsted (363), Sandusky (395), Seven Hills (370), and Westlake (299). As a part of the area that encompassed the original Kirtland Stake, members of the Cleveland Ohio Stake have a great work prepared for them. It is their mission to help carry out the prophecies made by so many early Church leaders and see that they are fulfilled. President Thomas H. Rice is the first stake president of the Cleveland Ohio Stake to be raised in the Cleveland area. He has personally witnessed the expansion of the Church over the years and has a great love for the area members, many of whom he has known all his life. President Rice is striving to strengthen and prepare local leaders in anticipation of the great growth that will take place in the area. He, like President William A. Groesbeck, and other stake presidents before him, is striving to help the members “catch the vision of a mighty work, the work of the Lord, that we are builders of the Kingdom” in this choice area.



## Cleveland Ohio Stake Presidents

1961 – 1962	President E. Doyle Robison Counselors: Forest J. Squire M. Brent Marriott
1962 – 1974	President Forest J. Squire Counselors: M. Brent Marriott Robert F. Williams Jerry O. Mortensen Karl R. Anderson
1974 – 1978	President Karl R. Anderson Counselors: Zane F. Lee Carmen J. Libutti Clayn R. Smith
1978 – 1980	President Gordon T. Watts Counselors: William A. Groesbeck David E. Wiltbank
1980 – 1990	President William A. Groesbeck Counselors: David E. Wiltbank Kenneth Bradford Walter C. Selden Thomas O. Stubben William G. Miles Douglas D. Wilson
1990 – 1997	President Douglas D. Wilson Counselors: Thomas H. Rice Rees C. Madsen
1997 –	President Thomas H. Rice Counselors: K. Wade Tolman Kenneth R. Ervin



## **Cleveland Bishops and Branch Presidents**

Cleveland Branch was organized September 12, 1937. It was part of the Northern Ohio District from 1937 to 1939 and part of the North Ohio District from 1939 to 1961.

### **Cleveland Branch**

Branch President Elmer R. Hall .....	1937 - 1941
Branch President Russell Glauser .....	1941 - 1947
Branch President Parley P. Eccles .....	1947 - 1948
Branch President George C. Reimschuessel.....	1948 - 1950
Branch President Byron E. Nelson .....	1950 - 1950
Branch President Melvin L. Gillie .....	1950 - 1954
Branch President Burtis R. Evans .....	1954 - abt. 1955
Branch President Richard Hatfield .....	abt. 1955 - 1957
Branch President Forest J. Squire .....	1957 - abt. 1959
Branch President Waldo Perkins .....	abt. 1959 - 1960
Branch President Frank A. Woodbury.....	1960 - 1961*

## **Cleveland Ohio Stake - Organized September 20, 1961**

### **Cleveland Ward**

Bishop Frank A. Woodbury* .....	1961 - 1965
Bishop William A. Groesbeck .....	1965 - 1972
Bishop Clayn R. Smith .....	1972 - 1974 *

## **Cleveland Ward - Divided February 17, 1974**

### **Cleveland 1<sup>st</sup> Ward (Westlake 1<sup>st</sup> Ward - 1983)**

Bishop Clayn R. Smith * .....	1974 - 1975
Bishop Walter Heinz.....	1975 - 1977
Bishop Jay Bell .....	1977 - 1978
Bishop D. Thomas McVey .....	1978 - 1978
Bishop J. Craig Hale .....	1978 - 1979
Bishop Dawn R. Wride .....	1979 - 1983
Bishop James T. Ash.....	1983 - 1986 *

### **Cleveland 4<sup>th</sup> Ward (Westlake 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward - 1983)**

Bishop Rees C. Madsen .....	1974 - 1974
Bishop Robert Hinckley.....	1974 - 1977
Bishop Richard C. Cope .....	1977 - 1977
Bishop Harold D. Carver .....	1977 - 1978
Bishop Gordon T. Watts .....	1978 - 1978
Bishop James Allen.....	1978 - 1979
Bishop Thomas O. Stubben .....	1979 - 1983
Bishop George A. Holden.....	1983 - 1986 *



## **Stake Boundary Changes September 28, 1986**

The Westlake 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, Westlake 2<sup>nd</sup> Ward, and Seven Hills Ward boundaries were changed to make the Cleveland Ward, Westlake Ward, North Olmsted Ward, and Seven Hills Ward.

### **Westlake Ward - 1986**

Bishop George A. Holden *	1986 - 1987
Bishop Melvin J. Baumann	1987 - 1990
Bishop James L. LaClare	1990 - 1994
Bishop Owen B. Zuro	1994 - 1999
Bishop Ronald K. Dewsnap	1999 -

### **North Olmsted Ward - 1986**

Bishop Kevin D. Burnett	1986 - 1990
Bishop Cordell W. Petz	1990 - 1996
Bishop Earl M. Mortensen	1996 -

### **Cleveland Ward - 1986**

Bishop James T. Ash *	1986 - 1989
Bishop John F. Gregg	1989 - 1991
Bishop Dee Dixon	1991 - 1993
Bishop William L. Merker	1993 - 1999
Bishop James Murphy	1999 -

### **Seven Hills Ward (Cleveland 5<sup>th</sup> Ward - 1977 to 1983)**

Bishop Roger Osborne	1977 - 1982
Bishop Michael Davies	1982 - 1983
Bishop Jeffrey Walker	1983 - 1986
Bishop Thomas H. Rice	1986 - 1989
Bishop Jerry M. Harston	1989 - 1994
Bishop Michael L. Snyder	1994 - 1999
Bishop Bronson Gardner	1999 -

## **Elyria Ward, Lorain Ward, and Sandusky Ward**

### **Elyria Ward - 1983**

Bishop James B. Wells *	1983 - 1988
Bishop Kenneth R. Ervin	1988 - 1995
Bishop Steven R. Huff	1995 - 2000
Bishop Eric Mahler	2000 -



**Lorain Branch - January 1955 (Lorain Ward - October 22, 1961)**

Branch President Don L. Cazier .....	1955 - 1957
Branch President Kenneth Sayler .....	1957 - 1959
Branch President Albert E. Brooks .....	1959 - 1961
Bishop Frank W. Kosco, Sr. ....	1961 - 1965
Bishop Eddie W. Dumont .....	1965 - 1970
Bishop John Gallagher .....	1970 - 1976
Bishop Robert Peirce .....	1976 - 1978
Bishop Giles Lambertson .....	1978 - 1981
Bishop James B. Wells .....	1981 - 1983 *
Bishop James R. Everett .....	1983 - 1985
Bishop Roger A. Osborne .....	1985 - 1988
Bishop John R. Stafford .....	1988 - 1993
Bishop Richard J. Stencil .....	1993 - 1995
Bishop Wade Ficklin .....	1995 - 1996
Bishop Randall W. Stay .....	1996 -

**Sandusky Branch - 1955 (Sandusky Ward - September 27, 1975)**

Branch President Orrin G. Hatch .....	1955 - 1956
Branch President Robert Christensen .....	1956 - 1957
Branch President Glen Curtis .....	1957 - 1959
Branch President Williard Jessop .....	1959 - 1960
Branch President John S. Aldrich .....	1960 - 1961
Branch President Austin N. Jensen .....	1961 - 1962
Branch President Dale Olsen .....	1962 - 1963
Branch President Robert Davis .....	1963 - 1964
Branch President Roy Mendenhall .....	1964 - 1972
Branch President John S. Aldrich .....	1972 - 1972
Branch President Gordon Blackham .....	1972 - 1973
Branch President Jack Williamson .....	1973 - 1975
Bishop Robert C. Hanson .....	1975 - 1979
Bishop Jack Jenks .....	1979 - 1981
Bishop Eric Robinson .....	1981 - 1984
Bishop Lance Christensen .....	1984 - 1985
Bishop Kelly Grubaugh .....	1985 - 1987
Bishop Gary A. Billiard .....	1987 - 1997
Bishop C. Loren Anderson .....	1997 -

\*Continued as Bishop



## Cleveland Ohio Stake Relief Society Presidents

Norma Chivers .....	1961 – 1963
Margaret Wallis .....	1963 – 1964
Madelynn Thomson .....	1964 – 1966
Carolyn Shumway .....	1966 – 1967
Marjorie Jones .....	1967 – 1969
Helen Noble .....	1969 – 1971
Fern Woodbury .....	1971 – 1971
Leola Dallin .....	1971 – 1977
Beverly Nye .....	1977 – 1977
Helen McVey .....	1977 – 1978
Geraldine Squire .....	1978 – 1980
Michelle Cox .....	1980 – 1983
Betty Franklin .....	1983 – 1988
Helen Wilson .....	1988 – 1990
Sandra Stubben .....	1990 – 1998
Wanda Bublik .....	1998 –

### Ward information contributed by:

Cleveland Ward	Peggy Kilroy and Shirley Arendt
Elyria Ward	Dorothy Salyer
Lorain Ward	Roger and Gladys Osborne, John Stafford, and Charles Morgan
North Olmsted Ward	Carolyn Smith
Sandusky Ward	Carolyn Perdue
Seven Hills Ward	Les and Diane Armstrong
Westlake Ward	Betty Franklin and Jean Lowry



# Footnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Karl R. Anderson and Keith W. Perkins, *A Walk Through the Sacred Land of "The Ohio,"* 1955, Preface.
- <sup>2</sup> Karl R. Anderson, Pamphlet, *Kirtland, Village of Prophecy*, p. 15.
- <sup>3</sup> M. Russell Ballard, "What Came From Kirtland," (Provo: Brigham Young University 1994-95 Devotional Fireside Speeches, 1955), p. 42.
- <sup>4</sup> Anderson, *Kirtland, Village of Prophecy*, p. 14.
- <sup>5</sup> Anderson and Perkins, *A Walk Through the Sacred Land of "The Ohio,"* Preface.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1960) 2:51. Hereafter cited as *History of the Church*.
- <sup>8</sup> Joseph Young, Sr., to Lewis Harvey, November 16, 1880, regarding statements he had heard Joseph make. Cited by Anderson, *Kirtland Village of Prophecy* p. 13.
- <sup>9</sup> *History of the Church* 2:479.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 4:204.
- <sup>11</sup> Joseph Smith to Brother Granger, July 1840, in Dean C. Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, p. 476. Cited by Anderson, *Kirtland, Village of Prophecy*, p. 13.
- <sup>12</sup> *History of the Church*, 4:226.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., 6:609-610.
- <sup>14</sup> Karl R. Anderson, Video of Cleveland Ohio Stake Conference, October 16, 1983, provided by Pam Groesbeck Smith.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., William A. Groesbeck.
- <sup>16</sup> William A. Groesbeck, Personal Journal, July 17, 1980 entry provided for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History by his daughter Pam Groesbeck Smith.
- <sup>17</sup> Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1950), p. 36.
- <sup>18</sup> Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), p. 9. (Orange, Karl Anderson)
- <sup>19</sup> *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Vol. 2, Lamanite Mission of 1830-1831.
- <sup>20</sup> Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, p. 36.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 39.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 38-39.
- <sup>23</sup> Rebecca Stay, Information on Amherst submitted for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>24</sup> Milton V. Backman, "Kirtland, the Crucial Years," *Ensign*, January 1979, p. 26.
- <sup>25</sup> Karl Ricks Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), p. 149.
- <sup>26</sup> Karl Ricks Anderson, "History of the Ohio Akron, Cleveland and Kirtland Stakes" submitted for the Cornerstone of the Toronto Temple, July 25, 1990. Hereafter cited as "Cornerstone Report for the Toronto Temple."
- <sup>27</sup> Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, p. 155.
- <sup>28</sup> Eliza R. Snow, *An Immortal: Selected Writings of Eliza R. Snow* (Salt Lake City: Nicholas G. Morgan, Sr., Foundation, 1957) p. 54.
- <sup>29</sup> Ballard, "What Comes from Kirtland," p. 44.
- <sup>30</sup> Orson R. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Inc., 1945). p. 91; Ballard, "What Comes from Kirtland," p. 44.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 92.
- <sup>32</sup> Backman, *The Heavens Resound*, p. 284.
- <sup>33</sup> Ballard, "What Comes From Kirtland," p. 42.
- <sup>34</sup> Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle, *Old Mormon Kirtland and Missouri* (Santa Ana, California: Fieldbrook Productions, Inc., 1991) p. 277.
- <sup>35</sup> Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, p. 235.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> Backman, *The Heavens Resound*, p. 352.
- <sup>38</sup> Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, p. 235.
- <sup>39</sup> *History of the Church*, 4:443-444.
- <sup>40</sup> Artel Ricks, "Hyrum's Prophecy," *Improvement Era*, May 1956, p. 340.
- <sup>41</sup> Backman, *The Heavens Resound*, p. 368.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ensign*, "Kirtland Today," February 1979, p. 51.
- <sup>44</sup> Backman, *The Heaven's Resound*, p. 370.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup> Karl R. Anderson, Notes to Sandra Stubben, June 1999
- <sup>47</sup> Donald S. Brewer, Interview with Sandra Stubben, 1999.
- <sup>48</sup> Elder Niles P. Romney as quoted by Mary B. Katzenbach, *Multiply and Divide, A History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Central Ohio* (Tri-Village Printing Company, Inc., Columbus, Ohio, 1981), p. 3.
- <sup>49</sup> Anderson, "Cornerstone Report for the Toronto Temple."
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid.



- <sup>51</sup> Elder Ernest D. Phippen as quoted by Katzenbach, *Multiply and Divide, A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Central Ohio*, pp. 5-7.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-7.
- <sup>53</sup> Dedication Program for the Akron Ward Chapel, January 7, 1967.
- <sup>54</sup> Anderson "Cornerstone Report for the Toronto Temple.
- <sup>55</sup> Elder Conly Hansen as quoted by Katzenbach, *Multiply and Divide, A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Central Ohio*, p. 11-12.
- <sup>56</sup> Katzenbach, *Multiply and Divide, A History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Central Ohio*, p. 134.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 20.
- <sup>58</sup> Virginia Jaracz, Information provided for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History.
- <sup>59</sup> Original Handwritten Cleveland Branch Records, 1936.
- <sup>60</sup> Pam Groesbeck Smith, Cited from letter in her possession and Historical Records 1948.
- <sup>61</sup> Historical Records 1937.
- <sup>62</sup> "Cleveland Branch Dedication Booklet," p. 7.
- <sup>63</sup> Anderson, "Cornerstone Report for the Toronto Temple."
- <sup>64</sup> "Cleveland Branch Dedication booklet," pp. 7-8.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 8.
- <sup>66</sup> Virginia Jaracz, Information provided for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History.
- <sup>67</sup> Anderson, "Cornerstone Report for the Toronto Temple."
- <sup>68</sup> Harry Headrick, Sr., Information provided for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 2000.
- <sup>69</sup> Ruby Flory, Interview with Sandra Stubben, 2000.
- <sup>70</sup> Ruby Flory and Eugene Robinson, Personal Journals.
- <sup>71</sup> Ruby Flory, Interview with Sandra Stubben, 2000.
- <sup>72</sup> Cleveland East Ward Dedication Booklet, July 1, 1969.
- <sup>73</sup> Artel Ricks, Personal Notes regarding "Hyrum's Prophecy," August 28, 1984.
- <sup>74</sup> Karl R. Anderson, Interview with Sandra Stubben, 2000.
- <sup>75</sup> "Cleveland Branch Dedication Booklet," pp. 7-8.
- <sup>76</sup> Pearl Vacenda, Interview with Robert Arendt, December 11, 1986. Used with permission of Pearl Vacenda.
- <sup>77</sup> Lee Ann Wilsted Packer, Letter in the possession of Karl R. Anderson.
- <sup>78</sup> Ricks, "Hyrum's Prophecy."
- <sup>79</sup> Forest J. Squire, Personal Notes submitted for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>80</sup> Roger A. Osborne, Interview with Sandra Stubben for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>81</sup> Packer, Letter in the possession of Karl R. Anderson.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>83</sup> Margaret Scarborough, Information obtained by Jean Lowry.
- <sup>84</sup> David O. McKay, "Dedication Address at the Cleveland Branch," 1954.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>87</sup> Anderson, "Cornerstone Report for the Toronto Temple."
- <sup>88</sup> "Lorain Ward Dedication Booklet," June 4, 1965.
- <sup>89</sup> Carolyn Perdue, Information on the Sandusky Ward submitted for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>90</sup> Roger A. Osborne, Interview and Cleveland East Ward Dedication Booklet, July 1, 1969.
- <sup>91</sup> Dolores Bottorff, Information provided for the Cleveland Ohio Stake history, 2000.
- <sup>92</sup> Information compiled for the cornerstone of the Columbus Temple, 1999.
- <sup>93</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>96</sup> Richard Kistler, Information provided for Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 2000.
- <sup>97</sup> Information compiled for the cornerstone of the Columbus Temple, 1999.
- <sup>98</sup> Doyle G. Robison, Personal notes sent to Forest Squire for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>99</sup> "Quarterly History for the Cleveland Stake," September 30, 1961.
- <sup>100</sup> Robison, Personal Notes.
- <sup>101</sup> Squire, Personal Notes.
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>103</sup> M. Brent Marriott, Notes submitted by Forest Squire for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>104</sup> "Cleveland Stake Historical Events," December 31, 1971.
- <sup>105</sup> Squire, Personal Notes.
- <sup>106</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants*
- <sup>107</sup> *History of the Church*, 1:263.
- <sup>108</sup> Ibid., 1:264.



- <sup>109</sup> Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, p. 250.
- <sup>110</sup> Squire, Personal Notes.
- <sup>111</sup> History of the Akron Stake submitted for the Cornerstone of the Columbus Temple, 1999.
- <sup>112</sup> Cleveland East Ward Dedication Booklet, June 1, 1969 and personal interview with Roger A. Osborne.
- <sup>113</sup> John Gallagher, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>114</sup> Marion Groesbeck, Personal notes in possession of Pam Groesbeck Smith.
- <sup>115</sup> Robert Arendt, "Buildings and Properties of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Cleveland Area," December 11, 1986.
- <sup>116</sup> Gladys Osborne, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>117</sup> Arendt, "Buildings and Properties of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Cleveland Area." Used with permission of Joe Fedor.
- <sup>118</sup> Cleveland Stake Dedication Program, June 10, 1971.
- <sup>119</sup> Groesbeck, Journal.
- <sup>120</sup> Perdue, Sandusky Ward History.
- <sup>121</sup> Jack Williamson, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>122</sup> Karl R. Anderson, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>123</sup> Gerry Squire, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>124</sup> "Cleveland Stake Historical Report," December 1975.
- <sup>125</sup> Historical Reports, December 31, 1971 and December 31, 1974.
- <sup>126</sup> Anderson, Personal Notes.
- <sup>127</sup> Groesbeck, Journal; Historical Report 1977.
- <sup>128</sup> Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, Bishop Davis as quoted in, p. 246.
- <sup>129</sup> Donald S. Brewer, Journal, December 31, 1978. Provided for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>130</sup> Donald S. Brewer, Interview with Sandra Stubben, July 2000.
- <sup>131</sup> Anderson, "Cornerstone Report for the Toronto Temple." Personal Interview with Sandra Stubben, 2000.
- <sup>132</sup> Gordon T. Watts, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>133</sup> Thomas O. Stubben, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>134</sup> Brewer, Journal, December 1977.
- <sup>135</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>136</sup> Donald S. Brewer, "Kirtland Journal," donated to the Church Historical Department. Raymond S. Baum as quoted in, January 1978.
- <sup>137</sup> *Ensign*, "Kirtland Today," February 1979, p. 51.
- <sup>138</sup> Brewer, Journal, February 3, 1979.
- <sup>139</sup> Donald S. Brewer, Personal Journal, August 18, 1977.
- <sup>140</sup> Ibid., December 16, 1983.
- <sup>141</sup> Ibid., October 16, 1983.
- <sup>142</sup> Ibid., December 31, 1978.
- <sup>143</sup> Ibid., April 4, 1979.
- <sup>144</sup> *Lake County News-Herald*, October 25, 1980, p. 27.
- <sup>145</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>146</sup> Brewer, Personal Journal, April 4, 1979.
- <sup>147</sup> Joseph H. Young, Personal Journal, October 15, 1979, provided for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History.
- <sup>148</sup> *Ensign*, December 1979, p. 70.
- <sup>149</sup> Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, p. 247. President Ezra Taft Benson as quoted in.
- <sup>150</sup> *Church News*, October 20, 1979, p. 3.
- <sup>151</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>152</sup> Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, p. 247. Gordon T. Watts as quoted in.
- <sup>153</sup> Joseph H. Young, Journal, October 15, 1979.
- <sup>154</sup> Anderson, "Cornerstone Report for the Toronto Temple."
- <sup>155</sup> Historical Reports 1983, 1984, 1988.
- <sup>156</sup> Groesbeck, Journal, July 17, 1980.
- <sup>157</sup> Kirtland Dedication Booklet
- <sup>158</sup> Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, p. 247.
- <sup>159</sup> Anderson, "Cornerstone Report for the Toronto Temple."
- <sup>160</sup> Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, pp. 247-248. Zane Lee as quoted in.
- <sup>161</sup> "In Kirtland: Revelations Remembered, The Gathering Continues," *Ensign*, June 1983, p. 76.
- <sup>162</sup> Anderson, "Cornerstone Report for the Toronto Temple."
- <sup>163</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>164</sup> "Finding the Posterity is Kirtland's New Challenge," *Ensign*, December 1982, p. 61.
- <sup>165</sup> Ibid., pp. 61-62. Used with permission of Bruce Walborn.
- <sup>166</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>167</sup> Groesbeck, Journal, May 4, 1983.
- <sup>168</sup> "Cleveland Ohio Stake Historical Record," 1983, Section B.
- <sup>169</sup> Groesbeck, Journal, October 1983.



- <sup>170</sup> William A. Groesbeck, Video of Cleveland Stake Conference, October 16, 1983, provided by Pam Groesbeck Smith.
- <sup>171</sup> Ibid., Karl R. Anderson.
- <sup>172</sup> Ibid., A. Theodore Tuttle.
- <sup>173</sup> Ibid., President Ezra Taft Benson.
- <sup>174</sup> "Cleveland Stake Historical Report," 1983.
- <sup>175</sup> Groesbeck, Journal, October 1983.
- <sup>176</sup> William A. Groesbeck, Letter to President and Sister Ezra Taft Benson in possession of Pam Groesbeck Smith.
- <sup>177</sup> Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland*, p. 250. President Ezra Taft Benson as quoted in.
- <sup>178</sup> Groesbeck, Personal Journal, August 25, 1984.
- <sup>179</sup> Anderson, "Kirtland, Village of Prophecy," p. 7.
- <sup>180</sup> Ballard, "What Comes from Kirtland." *History of the Church*, 1:334-335.
- <sup>181</sup> Anderson, "Kirtland, Village of Prophecy," p. 7.
- <sup>182</sup> *Ensign*, "House of Revelation," p. 34.
- <sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 31.
- <sup>184</sup> William A. Groesbeck, Journal, January 1986.
- <sup>185</sup> Ibid., February 13, 1986.
- <sup>186</sup> Jerry M. Harston, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>187</sup> Kevin Burnett, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>188</sup> Steven R. Huff, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>189</sup> Douglas D. Wilson, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>190</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>191</sup> Owen Zuro, Information provided for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 2000.
- <sup>192</sup> Douglas D. Wilson, Personal notes.
- <sup>193</sup> William R. Mercker, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>194</sup> Thomas H. Rice, Personal notes for the Cleveland Ohio Stake History, 1999.
- <sup>195</sup> Thomas D. Jones, Westlake Ward Sacrament Meeting Program, September 5, 1999. President Gordon B. Hinckley as quoted in.
- <sup>196</sup> Donald S. Brewer, Personal Journal, 1979.
- <sup>197</sup> Ballard, "What Comes From Kirtland," p. 42.

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